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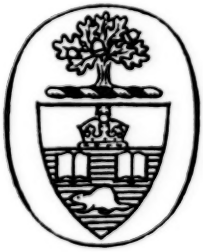

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ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF CANADIAN PHILOSOPHY

JOHN A. IRVING

ALTHOUGH in the present paper we shall consider only the development of modern philosophy in English Canada, it should not be forgotten that the philosophical tradition of French Canada goes back at least three centuries. In justification of our procedure it is perhaps necessary to remind an American audience[1] that the "conquest" of New France by the British nearly two hundred years ago was essentially military. Certainly the earlier French-speaking population has never been assimilated racially, linguistically, or culturally by the numerically superior English. Ostensibly united politically, in most other respects the two groups have gone their separate ways. The absence of any treatment of French-Canadian philosophy in the present paper should be interpreted, therefore, as symbolic of the basic cultural disunity of the country.

The teaching of modern philosophy began in Canada a century ago with the appointment in 1850 of James Beaven (1801-75) to a professorship of Metaphysics and Ethics in the newly reconstructed University of Toronto. In the evolution of a Canadian philosophical consciousness during the last hundred years five phases or stages may be distinguished. First, the Scottish philosophy of Common Sense as developed by Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart, and as modified by Sir William Hamilton, was widely diffused during the period from 1850 to 1872. Second, Objective Idealism dominated the half-century from 1872 to 1922, chiefly through the labours of John Watson. Third, the Realism of George Sidney Brett was the most influential new approach between the years 1910 and 1940. Fourth, a search for a "balanced philosophy," whether through the use of the comparative method as advocated by Rupert Clendon Lodge, or otherwise, has been the determining characteristic during the past decade. Fifth, in the future, the stage not yet reached, the principal emphases will be in the fields of intellectual history and of social philosophy.

[1]This is the first of two papers, printed in this issue, which were presented at the forty-seventh annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association (Eastern Division), held at the University of Toronto. They were given at a symposium on Canadian philosophy, December 29, 1950. It should be noted that Professor Max Black, the chairman of the programme committee, made several efforts, in co-operation with Professor Charles W. Hendel and the present writer, to secure a spokesman from French Canada for the symposium. It is to be regretted that these efforts were unsuccessful.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO QUARTERLY, vol. XX, no. 2, Jan., 1951

The most distinguished Canadian representative of Common Sense was John Clark Murray (1836-1917). Educated at Edinburgh by Sir William Hamilton, and subsequently at Göttingen and Heidelberg, he introduced into Canada the idea that the work of the Scottish school must be supplemented by ancient, as well as by modern French and German, philosophy. This broad approach entailed an emphasis on the history of philosophy and the study of representative classical systems. Murray's *Outline of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy,* published at Boston in 1870, is the first technical philosophical book written in Canada. James McCosh, in a laudatory introduction, stated that "Sir William Hamilton was the greatest metaphysician of his age, and his metaphysics will be studied by thinking minds in all coming ages." It was imperative, therefore, that Hamilton's philosophy should be presented in systematic form, and this difficult task, McCosh concluded, had been carried out admirably by Murray. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century Murray became a somewhat eclectic idealist, and his later introductory texts in ethics and psychology illustrate the intellectual conflict he experienced, in common with others of that period in the United States and Canada, as the Hamiltonian philosophy gave way before the advance of Objective Idealism.

The leading representatives of Idealism in Canada have been George Paxton Young (1818-89), John Watson (1847-1939), William Caldwell (1862-1942), George John Blewett (1873-1912), Herbert Leslie Stewart (b. 1882), and John Macdonald (b. 1888). Of these, John Watson was unquestionably the most interesting as well as the most influential.

In his intellectual development Watson was profoundly influenced by Edward Caird, under whom he studied at Glasgow between 1866 and 1872. During these years Caird was expounding and examining the critical philosophy of Kant with the object of showing that this philosophy, if interpreted rationally and consistently, leads to the Absolute Idealism of Hegel. As the new idealism developed, it gradually became apparent that a more liberal interpretation of Christianity than had hitherto existed was possible. Confronted with the advance of science, the theory of evolution, the new biblical criticism, and an aggressive enlightenment, Caird sought to show that Absolute Idealism preserved the essence of traditional religion while giving to it a more rational form.

In 1872, at the age of twenty-five, Watson came to Canada sealed with the seal of Edward Caird, to whom it gave no small satisfaction to know that Idealism would have such a strong representative in the New World. The young idealist had barely arrived in this country

when he charted his future course in an inaugural lecture at Queen's University, where he was to teach philosophy for the next fifty-two years. In this lecture, entitled *The Relation of Philosophy to Science,* Watson surveyed incisively and maturely the limits of philosophy, science, and religion. The presuppositions and weaknesses of T. H. Huxley's scientific materialism, Herbert Spencer's evolutionary naturalism, and J. S. Mill's empiricism were pointed out with devastating accuracy; and the claims of religion were vindicated by an appeal to the Kantian critical philosophy, to which were added the overtones of Caird's Idealism.

With the exception of Royce, Watson was the most prolific writer of the idealistic movement on this continent. His books and articles enjoyed wide popularity because his teaching was organically related to the socio-cultural environment of the age. The Idealism of Caird and Watson had, as James Cappon once put it, "a well-defined public, whose needs and receptivities counted for something in the form which their teaching took." Both the grandeur and the sobriety of Watson's speculations were partly due to the need in Canada of adjusting philosophical thought to a watchful and inquiring public which was not confined to academic circles.

Watson's major writings fall into four main groups, according as they are concerned with (1) classical German philosophy; (2) hedonism, positivism, and empiricism; (3) the philosophy of religion; (4) political philosophy. On German philosophy, Watson wrote such authoritative books as *Kant and His English Critics* (1881), *The Philosophy of Kant Explained* (1908), and *Schelling's Transcendental Idealism* (1882). In addition to these expository and critical works, he edited and translated *Selections from Kant,* a book which was revised and reprinted eleven times between 1882 and 1934. This project grew out of his realization that if students of philosophy were to pass from a lower to a higher plane of thought they must read the classical texts for themselves. He would set his more advanced students at work upon the text of Kant, watch them as they struggled with its perplexities, and give help only when it was needed. This method was adopted at Harvard and spread thence to many other American universities. Watson has probably done more to promote the study of Kant on this continent than any other North American philosopher.

In 1891 Watson performed a similar service for the empirical school with the publication of *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill,* another book of extracts. This was followed in 1895 by *Comte, Mill, and Spencer,* ostensibly a critical exposition of nineteenth-century positivism, empiricism, and evolutionism, but actually a constructive introduction to philosophy. In 1898 an elaborate addendum, *Notes,*

Historical and Critical, to Comte, Mill and Spencer, appeared, and later that year the two volumes were fused and published under a new title, *Outline of Philosophy.* During the next twenty-five years this book ran through half a dozen editions, and formed the basis of the introductory course in philosophy in most Canadian universities. Its wide acceptability in that period was guaranteed by Watson's statement of his position in the Preface: "The philosophical creed which commends itself to my mind is what in the text I have called Speculative Idealism, by which I mean the doctrine that we are capable of knowing Reality as it actually is, and that Reality when so known is absolutely rational." The criticism of the empirical tradition in philosophy was supplemented in 1895 with *Hedonistic Theories from Aristippus to Spencer,* an uncompromising demonstration of the view that no hedonistic theory can plausibly explain morality without assuming ideas inconsistent with its asserted principles.

In the popular consciousness Watson is usually thought of as having provided more adequate philosophical foundations for Christian theology. The popular view is, on the whole, correct, but it should be emphasized that he preferred to regard Christianity as an ideal of conduct rather than an historical theology. This approach was developed in a series of lectures given before the Philosophical Union of the University of California and published in 1896 as *Christianity and Idealism.* Here Watson argued that Christianity and Idealism, when each is understood, lend each other support. Each proves the other true; each is seen to be but a different expression of the same indivisibly threefold fact: God, freedom, and immortality. Idealism is the principle of morality and the principle of advancing history. Christianity is the germ of which Idealism is the full growth. This conception was developed further in 1907 in *The Philosophical Basis of Religion,* a series of essays in the reconstruction and history of religious belief which had been delivered before the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. But Watson's mature philosophy of religion found fullest expression in the Gifford Lectures which he delivered in the University of Glasgow during the years 1910 to 1912, and which were published in two volumes as *The Interpretation of Religious Experience.* This work, the crowning achievement of his philosophical career, concludes with a passionate plea for a faith which has a rational basis—in idealism:

> . . . the religious interests of man can be preserved only by a theology which affirms that all forms of being are manifestations of a single spiritual principle in identification with which the true life of man consists. Living in this faith the future of the race is assured. Religion is the spirit which must more and more subdue all things to itself,

informing science and art, and realizing itself in the higher organization of the family, the civic community, the state, and ultimately the world, and gradually filling the mind and heart of every individual with the love of God and the enthusiasm of humanity.[2]

The First World War drove Watson to a consideration of the problems of political philosophy which he, unlike most of the British idealists, had hitherto neglected. Two articles in the *Queen's Quarterly* on "German Philosophy and Politics" (1915) and "German Philosophy and the War" (1916) heralded the publication in 1919 of his last book, *The State in Peace and War*. Notable for its detachment, this book contains a survey of the evolution of political ideas from the origin of the city-state to the rise of the modern nation-state, an analysis of the latter in terms of its great associations and institutions, and a lengthy discussion of international relations in peace and war. In the light of idealistic principles, Watson prophesied that the treatment of the defeated Central Powers, as well as the structure of the League of Nations, would lead to renewed war. He died in 1939 at the age of ninety-two, only a few months before this prediction was realized.

During the seventy-five years between 1850 and 1925, philosophy in Canada was the shield of religion: Canadian theologians advanced into battle armed first with the slogans of Common Sense, later of Idealism. It is perhaps a unique feature of Canadian philosophical discussion during this long period that its problems, in so far as they were indigenous, should have been so greatly stimulated by the impact of biblical criticism. Such men as Young, Murray, and Watson were keenly interested in securing support for the new approach to the Scriptures. They were equally prepared to demonstrate that Idealism was designed to transform Christianity into a rational faith. Thus philosophy tended to mirror those movements, and only those movements, that could be used to secure rational support for religion. All other tendencies, more especially empiricism, positivism, utilitarianism, and evolutionary naturalism, as represented in the writings of Bentham, Comte, J. S. Mill, and Spencer, were continually subjected to relentless criticism in the universities.

The constant preoccupation of Canadian idealists with religious problems tended to blind them to the creative possibilities inherent in new developments in the natural and social sciences. This weak-

[2]John Watson, *The Interpretation of Religious Experience* (Glasgow, 1912), II, 327-8. For a fuller account of Watson's life and philosophy see John A. Irving, "The Development of Philosophy in Central Canada from 1850 to 1900," *Canadian Historical Review*, XXXI, 1950, 352-87. Acknowledgment is made to the editors of the above journal for permission to incorporate into the present paper certain material concerning the development of Canadian philosophy during the nineteenth century.

ness was nowhere more apparent than in their attitude to the theory of evolution. Young, Murray, and Watson would always protest that they were prepared to accept the theory of evolution as a scientific explanation of the origin of life. But for all their acceptance, the theory remained a dangerous one that might at any moment threaten their most cherished religious or philosophical beliefs. It must therefore be contained within idealistic metaphysics. Evolution had application only within the restricted domain of scientific methodology: its philosophical implications, as developed by Herbert Spencer, must be assiduously refuted.

The early eighteen-seventies were crucial years in Canadian philosophy, in that they marked the transition from Common Sense to Idealism; they were equally crucial years, though in quite a different way, in the development of American philosophy. For during those years the "Metaphysical Club," as C. S. Peirce called it, was meeting in Cambridge for the interchange of scientific and philosophical ideas. Its members were composed of two groups, one trained in the natural sciences, the other in historical and legal studies. But whatever their training or interests, these men were animated in their discussions by a rigorous adherence in all fields of investigation to the empirical methods of natural science and a common desire to apply the theory of evolution constructively and creatively to problems which philosophers had treated in terms of absolute principles. It was in this club, Peirce has recorded, that "the name and doctrine of pragmatism saw the light." Do the widely different attitudes of the Canadian idealists and the early American pragmatists in the eighteen-seventies to scientific method and the theory of evolution offer an explanation of the widely different roles that philosophy was destined to play in the two countries in the twentieth century?

Whatever the explanation, twentieth-century American philosophy has been characterized by the development of many new movements which have found scant support in Canada. In the United States, Idealism was followed, if not replaced, by a philosophical position more definitely attuned to the practical atmosphere of the times—the Pragmatism of James, Mead, and Dewey. During the last forty years so many American schools have arisen that Arthur Murphy has appropriately written of the "era of the 'isms.'" Along with the older brands of Idealism and Pragmatism, there have developed several varieties of realism, emergent naturalism, and finally logical positivism. Each new concept in the sciences, each new social enthusiasm, has tended to give birth to a new "ism," so that the American

intellectual scene has become a veritable fashion-parade of ideas. And all of these "isms" have been taught in the universities with a genteel tolerance, an urbane scepticism, that must have reached its culmination in Santayana's generous recommendation, "let each clean the windows of his own soul in his own fashion and enjoy the cosmic view as, from his particular angle, it could be surveyed."

Whether fortunately or unfortunately, no such luxuriant native growths have sprung up in Canada. Faced with a multitude of American and European "isms," Canadians have emphasized anew the importance of the history of philosophy: the thing most worth while is the famous philosophical literature of the past. The history of philosophy must be mastered thoroughly before critical or speculative activities can be profitably undertaken. Influential leadership in this direction was given through the life-work of George Sidney Brett (1879-1944), who also introduced Realism into Canada some forty years ago.

Brett was a realist—but a realist whom it is difficult to place within the conventional schools, either ancient or modern. He was undoubtedly influenced greatly by his studies in classical philosophy (one always associates him with Aristotle) to which may be attributed his breadth of view and unusual tolerance. He accepted a complete identification of the subject and the object in the act of cognition. The lowest element in knowledge is the judgment. Concepts and images belong to the psychological, not the epistemological, analysis of experience, and cannot themselves constitute judgment. Both the genetic and the anthropological treatments of experience are to be viewed with suspicion; neither of these approaches touches the epistemological question; neither at its best can do more than present successive stages in the complications of specific objects whether mental, human, or animal. In knowledge one must pass from an area which admits of categorization to another area which admits of categorization, and so on. Any attempt to unite successive fields of categorization in terms of behaviour or genetic continuity is eluding knowledge. This type of epistemology has certain affinities with early Aristotelian realism, but there were, in Brett's version, important reservations, particularly with respect to the problem of negation and the nature of limits of analysis.

"The given" in experience is that which permeates and includes the subject and *within which* analysis takes place. This sensibility is neither sensation in the traditional meaning nor a developed aesthetic experience. Whether we deal with it as a whole or in detail, it is an experience of a qualitative totality or a diversity in some special

reference. This was the point of his recurrence to Hobhouse's "Concrete Apprehension," and it also explains why, in discussing questions of religious experience, he invariably emphasized Otto's *Idea of the Holy*. Though Brett was never enthusiastic over Hegel's Idealism or Bosanquet's doctrine of logical coherence as a test of truth, he approved of the latter's view that the form of thought is a living function and the phases and moments of its function are the varieties and elements of its form. He was critical of the limitations of pragmatism but tolerant of its quest for a doctrine of reality as a condition actually present or "enjoyed" in some measure.

A wide and vivid appreciation of all things in the world around him seems to have been the motive of his realism. Things in their pressing and significant reality are apprehended, and the concepts or categories of thought can be evident only within such an apprehension. But the nature of this kind of experience, in relation to what have commonly been known as *sensa*, was not made clear in his teaching; nor did he seem to have a conclusive doctrine of precisely what it is we are dealing with when we talk about concepts, forms, subsistences. He was not very well satisfied with neo-realism, critical realism, or phenomenology, and considered them rather naïve distortions of experience, insecurely founded on the predilections of a narrowly intellectualistic approach. Bosanquet could never have charged him (as he did the ordinary realist) with delighting in denial and limitation for its own sake.

Influenced by long research on Gassendi and by careful studies of Leibniz, Lotze, and Bergson, Brett's metaphysical position was a form of dynamic pluralism. Existent objects are individuals and the individual is not to be interpreted (as by the Aristotelians) within the species. To admit the teleology which raises the species above the individual is to bring back the old essence under another guise and to substitute an abstraction for an existent entity. Methodological pluralism emphasizes categorical areas; each specific science has its categories, which in each case constitute an interdefinitive system. As objects become more and more complex, more and more systems of categories are involved in explanation and classification. Brett believed that no scheme had been devised in which the different systems of categories, such as those of physics and psychology, were unified within more inclusive categories. Metaphysics is not, therefore, the ultimate general science holding within its framework the more restricted sciences.

It was Brett's conviction, as it was that of his great contemporary Ernst Cassirer, that comprehensiveness is essential in philosophy.

This comprehensiveness makes greatness: through it a man may be the spectator of all times and places. But he must not hope to gain this comprehensive outlook by occupying one solitary peak: he must not flatter himself that there is an essence of all essences, that he can condense all life and thought into one magic drop. On the contrary he must keep the original wealth of material undiminished if he would have a world in which "life's garden blows"; if he abstracts and simplifies, the product is an "essence," a drop of scent in place of the living flower.[3]

Brett carried his emphasis on comprehensiveness into philosophical practice. Though a realist, he was perennially fascinated by the great British idealists, Green, Bradley, and Bosanquet. He realized that they had tried strenuously to reconcile presuppositions not peculiar to themselves with experience as a "given," and to do it on a grand scale. In their thinking, no matter how intellectual reality might be as a *system,* its other characteristic as a *realm of values* arose from the fact that the full nature of the given was their real concern. But Brett was rightly suspicious of the special and limited interests of the Canadian idealists.

Any final estimate of Brett's contribution to philosophy must necessarily emphasize the unique historical and synoptic method which he employed in the treatment of philosophical problems. For him the history of philosophy was a living body of thought. Faced with the endless procession of philosophical systems, he yielded neither to the sceptical relativism of Dilthey's *Historismus* nor to the rigorous absolutism of Husserl's *Phänomenologie.* In the history of philosophy he sought, rather, the meaning of existence for humanity. His historical and synoptic method is constantly illustrated in his published works which include *The Philosophy of Gassendi* (1908), *A History of Psychology* (3 volumes, 1912-21), *The Government of Man* (1913), *Psychology, Ancient and Modern* (1928), and some 125 articles and reviews on the history of science, the history of philosophy, the culture of India, political theory, ethics, and religion. One of the world's greatest historians of psychology,[4] his early interest in this field developed into a more general interest in the history of science.

Brett was greatly concerned over the long-continued and growing separation of science and the humanities in our educational systems. The only remedy for him was the humanizing of the sciences through the use of the historical method. Two great ideas of Hegel's philosophy of history, the idea of continuity and the idea of the organic totality of life, are essential to the historical approach not only in science but

[3]G. S. Brett, *The Philosophy of Gassendi* (London, 1908), vi-vii.

[4]For a treatment of Brett's contribution to the history of psychology see John A. Irving, "George Sidney Brett, 1879-1944," *Psychological Review,* LIV, 1947, 52-8.

in all other fields of inquiry as well. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have seen an increasing departmentalization of thought—a departmentalization which is incompatible with both of these great Hegelian ideas, and from which, incidentally, literary historians have probably suffered most. In a period when the highest intellectual achievements are those which have primary contact with scientific progress, it is essential to break down departmental walls and diffuse as widely as possible a knowledge of the achievements of modern science in their historical and cultural setting.

No one could have argued more vigorously than Brett for the importance of science; at the same time no one could have protested more vigorously than he against the superstition that "Science is All." For he realized too well that science has not inevitably been the benefactor of society, rescuing it from political strife or religious mania; nor has science been entirely free itself from bigotry and narrow-mindedness. It would be good for scientists to know that they are not independent of social forces; the history of science would give them an essential insight into their failures as well as their successes. "The object of a history of science is not to produce scientific discoveries so much as to create the right attitude toward science, and to make people realize that the spirit of discovery is only a species of curiosity which is innate in most minds, and with proper encouragement can survive the monotony of routine." Brett's technical contributions to this field, in such papers as "Astronomical Symbolism" and "The Effect of the Discovery of the Barometer on Contemporary Thought," provide rich illustrations of the power of the philosophic intelligence to illuminate that type of cultural environment which sustains and fosters the growth of the scientific outlook.

If Brett refused to separate rigidly philosophy and science, he was equally unaware of any gulf between philosophy and literature. In fact he believed that Greek and Roman literature and philosophy could be made a single comprehensive topic if properly treated. Philosophy and literature are also parallel paths in modern culture. For one cannot conceive of the existence of modern literature without postulating a system of social relations in which one finds some degree of science and philosophy as well as fiction and poetry. Brett taught a lesson highly relevant to Canadians, and one that they have hardly yet begun to learn—the lesson that all through history creative achievements in literature and art have been the result not of accident or fancy but of great ideas critically maintained.

Brett's unceasing use of the historical method must have been inspired by a belief in the essential unity of civilization; he did much

to establish that unity by exhibiting the logical and historical relationships between philosophical ideas and other great systems of ideas in science, literature, politics, and religion. In his dynamic mind the whole intellectual past of mankind seemed to live again.

During the past decade, Canadian thought has been characterized by an attempt to resolve the conflicting "isms" through the achievement of a "balanced philosophy." The leading advocate of this approach is Rupert Clendon Lodge (b. 1886), who seems to have derived the idea from his study of Plato's method after the foundation of the Academy. Lodge's published works include a translation of Varisco's *The Great Problems* (1914), *Simple Modes in the Philosophy of John Locke* (1918), *Introduction to Modern Logic* (1920), *Plato's Theory of Ethics* (1928), *Philosophy of Education* (1937, 1947), *The Questioning Mind* (1937, 1947), *Philosophy of Business* (1945), *Plato's Theory of Education* (1947), *The Great Thinkers* (1949), and *Applied Philosophy* (1950).

Lodge maintains that a philosopher must be either an idealist, a realist, or a pragmatist, and he has exhibited great ingenuity in the classification of various "isms" that seem to fall outside the three main movements. Is it possible to achieve a balanced philosophy that will do justice to all three schools and yet be neither an emasculated synthesis nor an incoherent eclecticism? The solution consists in the use of the comparative method. Confronted with the three distinctive philosophical schools, the comparative philosopher hastens to recognize the merit of each:

> He points out that, in the present stage of knowledge, students of the history of philosophy are indebted to all three schools and cannot do without any of them. From its especial angle, each makes a positive contribution to the subject. And while each has its negative and exclusive side, with which he is unable entirely to sympathize, he sees clearly that their efforts supplement one another, and it is his business, as a comparative philosopher, to point this out. . . . Plato was a "comparative philosopher," the founder of a new school which is only now coming into its own. The dramatic presentation of conflicting theories in his *Dialogues* and the "friendly rivalry" of his students in the Academy are partly reproduced in the "symposia" of our Philosophic Associations, in which representatives of different schools compare alternative hypotheses and put each other to the question.[5]

Faced with the charge that the comparative method of philosophizing leads to an anti-philosophical scepticism, Lodge replies:

[5]R. C. Lodge, "The Comparative Method in Philosophy," in *Manitoba Essays* (Toronto, 1937), 430. This and the following quotation are given with the permission of the Macmillan Company of Canada Limited.

If I desire to study triangularity, of course I study equilateral triangles. But I do not stop there. I also study isosceles triangles, and scalene triangles as well. I understand that the three species exclude one another. They are alternative forms which the genus takes. But none of these forms excludes the genus, to which all equally belong. To study the genus, triangularity, I have of course to study all the specific forms which it takes. Comparative study is the only proper method.

In exactly the same way, if I desire to study philosophy, and if it is true that philosophy necessarily takes one of three specific forms, I have of course to study all three. If philosophy is essentially speculative, an affair of alternative possibilities, I must study those alternative possibilities, and must not, in my enthusiasm for realism (or idealism or pragmatism) close my eyes to alternative possibilities. In so far as any one alternative (e.g. realism) refuses to be regarded as one alternative amongst others, and claims to be in exclusive possession of the whole truth, I must be sceptical of its claims. In fact, in so far as it ceases to be sceptical about its own claims, and becomes convinced realism (or convinced idealism or convinced pragmatism), it loses its open-mindedness and is really ceasing to be truly speculative and philosophical. In a word, it is precisely such one-sided philosophizing which is anti-philosophical, and not comparative philosophy, with its scepticism directed against one-sidedness. As the speculative construction of interpretations which essentially admit of alternatives, philosophy is necessarily sceptical of one-sided claims; and its proper method of study is necessarily comparative.[6]

The wary reader will detect in Lodge's writings a preference for the form of transcendental idealism developed by Bosanquet. But this personal bias has not prevented him from applying his comparative method with uncommon energy and penetration not only to the traditional problems of philosophy but also to various practical concerns such as education and business organization. These applications suggest that Lodge's approach, though derived independently, has certain affinities with views regarding the nature of philosophical systems advocated by such American philosophers as Felix S. Cohen, Arthur E. Murphy, W. H. Sheldon, and, more especially, Stephen C. Pepper. Many Canadian philosophers, while deriving instructive ideas from these writers, have concluded anew that a balanced philosophy will be more surely achieved through an intensive study of the history of philosophy.

As Canadian philosophy enters its fifth phase and its second century, it is clear that the present strong emphasis on the history of philosophy should be interpreted in terms of the tradition of the

[6] *Ibid.*, 431-2. Lodge has discussed the use of the comparative method further in the following publications: "Synthesis or Comparison?" *Journal of Philosophy*, XXXV, 1938, 432-40; "Balanced Philosophy and Eclecticism," *ibid.*, XLI, 1944, 85-91; *Philosophy of Business* (Chicago, 1945), 363-70, 421-2.

last hundred years. Ever since Murray published his *Outline of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* in 1870, the best philosophical scholarship in Canada has been devoted to historical studies. The long list of publications in this field includes Watson's books on Kant and Schelling, Caldwell's *Schopenhauer,* Brett's *History of Psychology,* Lodge's Platonic studies, Stewart's work on Nietzsche, Hendel's massive study of Rousseau, Anderson's books on Plato and Bacon, Goudge's *Thought of C. S. Peirce,* and Johnson's recently completed study of Whitehead's theory of reality. Such an enduring and distinguished tradition indicates that one of the principal emphases of Canadian philosophy in the future will be in the field of intellectual history.

In the perspective of the last hundred years, it is also clear that Brett must be acclaimed the founder and chief inspiration of the first indigenous philosophical movement to develop in Canada, the Toronto school of intellectual history. Among the members of this group, all of whom were trained by Brett, may be included F. H. Anderson, T. A. Goudge, George Edison, D. R. G. Owen, A. H. Johnson, Marcus Long, R. F. McCrae, and Emil Fackenheim. Working in association with them, though concentrating mainly on the history of medieval philosophy, are such gifted scholars of St. Michael's College and the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies as A. C. Pegis, J. M. Kelley, J. R. O'Donnell, V. B. Brezik, and L. E. M. Lynch, who were trained in part by Brett. Both groups have already made, and will continue to make, distinctive contributions to intellectual history. The Institute of Mediaeval Studies, which was founded in 1927, and which was under the brilliant presidency of Gerald B. Phelan (now of Notre Dame University) from 1932 to 1946, has also made a distinguished contribution to Canadian philosophy through the many eminent European scholars who have been attracted to its faculty, including Jacques Maritain, Etienne Gilson, and I. T. Eschmann.

For more than three-quarters of the last hundred years, philosophy in Canada was closely associated either with the defence of religious orthodoxy by Common Sense or with the provision of a more rational basis for theology by Idealism. During the last twenty years certain shifts in socio-cultural emphases have led to new alignments in philosophy. The depression of the thirties convinced many religious leaders who had looked upon Christianity essentially as a social gospel, and who had long supported the idealists on their left flank, that Idealism was lacking in social realism. Such clergymen as J. S. Woodsworth and T. C. Douglas now turned to the Fabians and became leaders in

the organization and development of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the socialist party of Canada. In this enterprise they were assisted by a number of philosophers, and especially by Gregory Vlastos. Other religious leaders, less philosophical in temper, of whom the most picturesque was William Aberhart, adopted the theories of Social Credit as a solution of the problems of the depression. Both the Social Credit and socialist movements should be interpreted as defections from idealistic social theory, as well as from the social gospel school of Christianity.

In the forties the turmoil and anxieties of the Second World War resulted in a further defection of religious leaders from the idealist ranks, this time on their right flank. Theologians who, following Watson's lead, had long looked to Idealism as a support for liberal Christianity, now took up the European "theology of crisis" as developed by Barth, Brunner, Niebuhr, and Tillich. During the past decade the slogans of Kierkegaard's Existentialism have replaced the slogans of Watson's Idealism in the enthusiasm of neo-orthodox theologians. The idealists were now wounded even in the houses of their friends.

The traditional alliance of Idealism with religion was turned to its disadvantage not only by existentialist theologians but also by Marxists, some of whom were recruits from the social gospel. In their representation of the church as a vested interest of the middle class, Marxists have not hesitated to denounce Idealism for its long religious associations: the history of Idealism, they insist, shows that it likewise is essentially a middle-class ideology. Abandoned on both its right and left flanks by religious leaders, and subjected to heavy criticism by Fabians and Marxists, it is perhaps not surprising that Idealism has failed to attract most of the younger philosophers. After a half-century of noon-day brilliance, followed by a long twilight, Idealism now faces its eclipse.

While recent socio-cultural developments have assisted in the denigration of Idealism, they have led to a realization of the importance of social philosophy, especially in western Canada. The economy of the Prairie Provinces is peculiarly vulnerable, and this extreme vulnerability has resulted in the rise of numerous protest movements in politics and economics. It is not accidental that such movements as the United Farmers of Alberta, the Progressive party, the Wheat Pools, Social Credit, and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation have all had their inspiration on the prairies. Since the days of Henry Wise Wood,[7] Western farm leaders have been keenly engaged

[7]See W. L. Morton, "The Social Philosophy of Henry Wise Wood, the Canadian Agrarian Leader," *Agricultural History*, XXII, 1948, 114-23; also William K. Rolph, *Henry Wise Wood of Alberta* (Toronto, 1950).

in discussing social, political, and economic problems. The rise of the United Farmers of Alberta to political power in 1921, followed by the victories of Social Credit in Alberta in 1935 and of agrarian socialism in Saskatchewan in 1944, are only the more spectacular results of forty years of such discussions. In western Canada there is a growing feeling that the universities should provide the systematic thought that is essential for a solution of its problems.

The need for a systematic development of social philosophy is becoming increasingly apparent not only to social and political leaders but also to social scientists and philosophers. Owing to the influence of the British tradition, Canadian social scientists have never become as indifferent, or even hostile, to philosophical considerations as their American neighbours. Among philosophers there is also a growing awareness that men who can speak with authority the languages of both philosophy and the social sciences are sorely needed today; for any social philosophy that can hope to stand must carry scientific as well as ethical conviction. Inspired by Adam Shortt (1859-1931), a pupil of Watson and a pioneer political scientist, a tradition in social philosophy has been slowly developing. Canadian publications in social philosophy, some by philosophers, others by social scientists, one by a former prime minister, include John Watson's *State in Peace and War,* Mackenzie King's *Industry and Humanity,* G. S. Brett's *Government of Man,* R. M. MacIver's *Modern State,* E. J. Urwick's *Social Good,* John Macdonald's *Expanding Community,* and H. A. Innis's *Political Economy and the Modern State.* This list suggests that the most concrete social thinking in Canada has been carried on in the field of social philosophy.

The future offers, therefore, an unparalleled opportunity for bringing philosophy into more fruitful relationships with the social sciences on the one hand and with the structure of social and political action on the other. A new educational outlook is needed which will enable us to develop both a facility in the investigation of social facts and a capacity to formulate rational value-judgments based on an adequate philosophical analysis. Social facts without social values are meaningless; social values without social facts are impotent. The divorce between these two approaches in educational systems is a shocking commentary on modern man's capacity either to understand or to control his social environment.

In the immediate future, social philosophy has two principal functions to fulfil. The first of these functions is methodological: that is, it is concerned with the problem of method in the social sciences. What kind of information can the social sciences give us about the type of reality that we call social? Without attempting to prescribe

methods of investigation to the social sciences, social philosophy can provide the critical apparatus for evaluating methods already chosen. It can develop an epistemology of social phenomena. The content of history courses, for example, at the elementary and secondary school levels in Canada may be taken as an index of the urgent need for critical analysis of the basic principles of historiography. Other important problems, properly considered in this phase of social philosophy, are the place of forceful self-assertion in human affairs, the relation of human will to alleged laws of social phenomena (e.g., are these laws descriptions of the workings of wills, or of the workings of events apart from the influence of wills?), the place of induction in economics, and the logical aspects of the social sciences.

The second and more important function of social philosophy is concerned with the problem of ultimate social values. The social sciences, *as sciences,* strive for ethical neutrality, although the distinction between facts and values is not consistently maintained. Economics, for example, deals with ends hypothetically; social philosophy with the choosing of ends. The one may inquire whether capitalism is efficient in attaining its ends; the other, whether the ends of capitalism are to be chosen. This ideal of the ethical neutrality of the social sciences implies, of course, that these sciences are concerned not with things as they ought to be, but with things as they are. Such an attitude is highly desirable in pure social science, but unless it is supplemented by a theory of ultimate values it will lead finally either to a romantic or to a dogmatic attitude towards social ends. Even economics, in attempting to divorce ends from means, is tainted with romanticism. We must have social facts before us if we are to determine the ends of social policy or the purposes of social institutions; but we must also have a training in the formation of value-judgments. Three different questions arise in connection with social institutions: (1) What ends do they in fact serve? (2) What ends are they intended to serve? (3) What ends ought they to serve? Present educational systems are weak in the training they provide in the assessment of value-judgments of the types necessary to deal with these three questions. Yet in contemporary discussions of capitalism *versus* state socialism, for example, it is necessary to be able to deal logically with such involved value-judgments.

These problems are not, of course, the exclusive concern of Canadians. Everywhere in the world today there exists the same need for the clarification of the fundamental epistemological and methodological conceptions of the social sciences, as well as for the provision of techniques by means of which facts and values may be related to

programmes of social action. But the humanistic temper of its philosophy, the happy relations that exist between philosophers and social scientists in its universities, and the relative calmness of its national life provide a unique opportunity for Canada to take the lead in the development of social philosophy.

There are certain indications that philosophy will play a much more dynamic role in Canadian civilization in future than it has played during the past hundred years. Its emphasis on intellectual history will continue to bring it into more vital relationships with scientific and humanistic interests; an emphasis on social philosophy will build up more intimate connections with the educational, social, economic, and political problems of the wider community. There are also indications that in future Canadian philosophy will be brought into closer relationships with American philosophy. While graduate students have attended American universities since the late eighteen-eighties, the main influence in Canadian philosophy has been British, and there has been a tendency to fill philosophical chairs with men trained at Oxford or the Scottish universities. No philosophical journals are published in Canada, nor is there a national philosophical association. But a number of younger philosophers are taking an increasingly active interest both in the meetings of the American Philosophical Association and in contributing to American philosophical periodicals. There is also an increasing awareness that Canada is a North American nation. In view of these tendencies, it is altogether fitting that the Eastern Division of the Association should hold its first meeting outside the United States in Canada in 1950, and that it should mark the completion of the first hundred years of Canadian philosophy by including this symposium on its programme.

THE CHARACTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN CANADA

CHARLES W. HENDEL

I SHALL offer for consideration an opinion concerning the character of philosophy in Canada.[1] The expression "philosophy in Canada," is chosen deliberately instead of "Canadian philosophy." For to talk of a *Canadian* philosophy may, in the present temper of the world, be misleading because one might suppose that there is a *national* philosophy of Canada, that is, a philosophy which is consciously national in character, and this would be contrary to fact.

Indeed the very immunity of Canadian scholars and philosophers to any such national self-consciousness seems to me their first remarkable characteristic. They appear quite oblivious of any national brand of philosophy which it is incumbent on them to defend or propagate. No Canadian Congresses have been solemnly convened to discuss the questions whether there is a Canadian philosophy, what it is, and what can be done to create more of it. Whenever members from Canada attend the Inter-American Congresses of Philosophy, where such questions are discussed about an all-American philosophy, they have not betrayed any national sensitiveness and they have never felt any urgency to assert themselves and demand recognition for some unique Canadian contribution to the pool of thought out of which a common American wisdom would some day, perhaps, be excogitated. They are not concerned with nationalism but keep themselves whole and sound for philosophy.

This obliviousness to nationalist ambition is due to their maturity and not to innocence of the world. There have been some troubling times in the development of this Canadian community. Indeed, the term "community" is almost too perfect a term to use in this connection. Professor Irving is treading very delicately, when he says that "the earlier French-speaking population has never been assimilated racially, linguistically, or culturally by the numerically superior English." He adds the regretful comment that there is a "basic cultural disunity" in Canada. Will not that "basic disunity" affect the spirit of the philosophy?

We cannot help asking this question and wanting to know more about the whole matter. Let us be more explicit about the relationships of the English and the French; for unless we are we might

[1]This is the second of two papers, printed in this issue, which were presented at the forty-seventh annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association (Eastern Division), held at the University of Toronto. They were given at a symposium on Canadian philosophy, December 29, 1950.

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suppose erroneously that it has been the settled purpose of the "numerically superior English" to effect unity through a cultural assimilation. Precisely this is what they have *not* attempted to do. Instead, they have accepted the historical diversity of culture in Canada. They have consented to it in their constitution. The French Canadians, settled for over three centuries in Quebec, have enjoyed the right to their own language everywhere, and especially in the schools, so that all their education, civil and religious, is given in their native tongue. English is a second language, required in school, and it is, of course, really necessary in the business of life. The Catholic-administered schools are tax-supported, from the portion of the taxes derived from the Catholic population of the province. The Church thus determines the culture of the people, as far as the culture can be determined through education and religion, for one realizes that the general practices of secular life in the modern world are also, in their way, educative. There is, then, a distinct French-Canadian culture which has been intentionally preserved and fostered. Here we see the *modus vivendi* of the English and the French, established as a matter of fundamental policy for the Dominion, which is truly a remarkable example of "live and let live," and an impressive demonstration of the attempt to apply the principle of tolerance. Yet in practice there are very great complications which we could hardly grasp without experience of life here, and much long, careful, objective study. Perhaps mention of only one political fact will suggest the complexity and the difficulties of life in this society: the "minority population" in Canada is the "majority" within the province of Quebec. The situation demands, therefore, careful give and take in various relationships, between whole provinces as well as between individuals with their different religions and cultures. And the many persons and groups involved, and the provincial as well as the national politicians, cannot always be as wise in their utterances and actions as the constitutional arrangement really requires all of them to be. It is hard to avoid having serious divisions arise from sheer nationalistic sentiment and a minority becoming obsessed with a self-consciousness about its minority status and feeling that it is being taken advantage of or even oppressed. Canadians have had experience of such national tensions, and the philosophers of Canada certainly know what nationalism is. Because they have risen above its temptations we can justly honour them as genuine philosophers.

Now granted that the philosophers have not been preoccupied with any national philosophy, we should inquire into the positive character of their philosophy.

Let us review "one hundred years of Canadian philosophy." First the Scottish Common Sense philosophy came to the universities of the English-speaking community, first through James Beaven, who taught at Toronto, but more notably through John Clark Murray of McGill. This philosophy yielded place to a later enthusiasm for the Hegelian Idealism, as interpreted, for example, by John Watson of Queen's. For half a century thereafter this twice-transplanted modern idealism occupied the thought of Canadian scholars and teachers, exactly as it did in the United States. It is great testimony to the powers of faith in men that this philosophy served so many for so long a time. In due course a critical realism followed, in both our countries, and in Canada particularly in the distinguished teaching and work of George Sidney Brett of Toronto.

Now, in the present generation, we cannot define the positions in the same way as before, by referring to idealism, realism, or any other metaphysics. This difficulty of contemporary characterization is not peculiar to philosophy in Canada. Everywhere there has been either a rejection of metaphysics, or at least a scepticism as to its value. It has become hard to discover what individual philosophers today positively believe that is of significance for the life of man. What they offer often seems to be only a succession of critical analyses without the philosopher himself taking any responsibility for putting together the result of one day's disclosure with that of another—a failure of human intelligence that leaves the mind dissatisfied and readily breeds an unfavourable opinion at large as to the futility of all that is called philosophy. Nevertheless there have been thinkers who persist in trying to *comprehend* all that they can dignify as knowledge, and then, further, to interpret its meaning for human life. They heed the insistent demand of the mind for "comprehensiveness," as Brett expressed it, a demand which has certainly been one of the motifs that sent men in the past into their various adventures of ideas. It still continues to operate even in some of those who would expressly disavow a metaphysics. They do try to comprehend and to construct and to work purposefully, so as to attain a knowledge that will satisfy the whole man. Such a way of philosophizing has been very aptly characterized by Ernst Cassirer in his *Problem of Knowledge: Philosophy, Science, and History since Hegel* in a passage which is particularly illuminating because it covers the period in European philosophy which is almost identical with the one we have been reviewing in Canada. "The era of the great constructive programs, in which philosophy might hope to systematize and organize all

knowledge, is past and gone. But the demand for synthesis and synopsis, for survey and comprehensive view, continues as before. . . ."[2]

That character of comprehensiveness is, indeed, what distinguishes the work of G. S. Brett. It is found, too, in the doctrine of R. C. Lodge of Manitoba, who advances a "comparative philosophy." And others likewise aim at it when they strive for a "balanced philosophy." These philosophies are not the old brands of metaphysics but they have the essential characteristic of metaphysical thinking.

We should now consider the past hundred years of philosophy in another aspect. Notwithstanding the changes of fashion in metaphysics during the first seventy-five years, a motif was operative that imparted unity and continuity to philosophy. Religion remained always important. The Canadians were kept conscious of its importance because their difference in religion was one of the factors that divided them into two distinct cultural groups. On the Protestant side, which was very susceptible to the secular pressures of scientific thought in the nineteenth century, philosophers came forward to save the faith by a reconciling interpretation of science and religion, for philosophers are liable to an illusion that they can produce greater agreement by their arguments. In this case their philosophy made an extraordinary claim to be the very fulfilment of the Christian religion. So Professor Irving reports of John Watson, in the statement that "Christianity is the germ of which Idealism is the full growth." And Watson himself in his Gifford Lectures used these words: ". . . the religious interests of man can be preserved only by a theology which affirms that all forms of being are manifestations of a single spiritual principle . . ."—that is, in effect, religion is saved by theology which in turn is identical with the philosophy of T. H. Green. And in consequence of such an equivalence, philosophy itself simply became a *religious* philosophy.

All that now seems far away and long ago. One might almost describe the turn of events today in the terms of a thriller title, "The Revenge of David Hume." For when T. H. Green edited Hume's works he prefaced them with extensive discussions intended to show up Hume's fundamental errors, and he actually declared that Hume's philosophy was "played out."[3] One piece of genuine insight in Hume seems not, however, to have been appreciated: in his *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* Hume had showed clearly that when the

[2]Ernst Cassirer, *The Problem of Knowledge: Philosophy, Science and History since Hegel* (New Haven, 1950), 19.

[3]David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, etc., ed. T. H. Green and T. T. Grose (London, 1874), II, 71.

meaning of religion is regarded as contained in a theology, and the theology is, in turn, resolved into propositions of philosophy, scepticism is the result. And note, it is not a scepticism in religion itself, for Hume had discerned very clearly that religion survives such a misapprehension of its nature; it was philosophy itself that was doomed to scepticism. And it is now the turn of that once triumphant idealistic philosophy to be "played out."

Our prevalent philosophy respects only science. We all tend to admire and seek to emulate the strict method of science. Here we see a sure way to knowledge. Philosophy in the United States is distinguished for its work on the nature of empirical truth and verification, and on many related questions in the logic of science. But it has not been exclusively concerned with these questions, for the pragmatic or instrumentalist philosophy in particular has demonstrated a comprehensive interest in the "problems of man," problems which include matters of ethics, aesthetics, social philosophy, and even of a "common faith."

What has happened in Canada? Has there been the same scientific direction of thought and its diversification into logical positivism and humanistic pragmatism? A negative answer is implied in Professor Irving's own question: "Do the widely different attitudes of the Canadian idealists and the early American pragmatists in the eighteen-seventies to scientific method and the theory of evolution offer an explanation of the widely different roles that philosophy was destined to play in the two countries in the twentieth century?" Our interest, of course, is not in any explanation but in the actual attitude of the philosophers of Canada towards science. Apparently they have not adopted either of the two positions. This does not mean that they fail to grasp the significance of science. In fact the Canadian thinkers appreciate the nature of empirical science and its method and value, and they honour it no less than others do. They have had among them creative scientists of first magnitude (to take only one well-known instance, Rutherford of McGill), but there have been, and are now, a very considerable number of others who are in the front ranks of both theoretical and experimental science. And the associations between men of science and philosophers in the universities are close enough to admit of *mutual* understanding. For what Professor Irving has said when speaking of social scientists can be applied no less to the natural scientists, that "owing to the influence of the British tradition" they "have never become as indifferent, or even hostile, to philosophical considerations as their American neighbours." Scientists and philosophers here are nearer together to begin with:

the scientists philosophize in their own way, and the philosophers do not feel that they have a mission to tell the world what science means. They have not even felt it necessary (though they may have made a mistake here) to construct, on their own account, a thorough-going "philosophy of science." They have been very canny about this contemporary enthusiasm and are moderate and restrained—another instance, it may be, of that "balance" which they cherish in their philosophy.

We of the United States should be careful lest we imagine the Canadian thinkers to be outside the main development of contemporary thought in the world merely because we cannot classify them according to those lines of allegiance to doctrine with which we are familiar in our country. Canadians, it appears, simply will not travel in shoals. As individuals, of course, they are not so noticeable as a whole school is, whose movement as a multitude can make a great stir and attract public attention. But it does not follow that excellent advertising makes good wares.

Let us desist, however, from any aggravating comparisons and consider instead what *are* the wares of the Canadians. What is the character of philosophy in Canada? In what achievements do they reveal their own distinctive genius?

Professor Irving has already shown that the philosophers of Canada are outstanding in their contribution to "intellectual history," and he speaks with a certain restrained pride here of a "Toronto school of intellectual history." So there is a school after all! But, mark you, it is not a school organized around any philosophic *doctrine*. It is simply a group of scholars developing the same branch of work in philosophy. They have had a common inspiration in the fine example of G. S. Brett, through whom, too, they have learned their philosophic method, but they do not make common cause and promote a Brettian philosophy or one of any other denomination. They remain independent philosophers quite disinterestedly engaged in their particular subjects of research in intellectual history.

Now this kind of philosophical achievement is really typical of the whole of Canada. Today the shining example is Toronto, but it is itself the outcome of a long development in history. There is a remarkably consistent tradition in the philosophical education provided by the universities of Canada. From the very first there were effective teachers who saw to it that their students would have a direct experience of the many-sided creative literature of philosophy. John Langton, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Toronto, commented in 1856 on the noteworthy fact that James Beaven, the professor of

ethics and metaphysics, "insists upon examining almost altogether from Aristotle, Cicero, etc., and positively requires them [the students] to read more Greek and Latin than" the professor of classics himself. Such study of the classical languages dwindled away everywhere during the course of the century but that strenuous requirement of working in the originals has here remained in effect. Canada has never needed any great public proclamation of the value of "the great books." The philosophical students have been brought up on them. Of course, the professors of Canada have been no more perfect in their practice of liberal education than the rest of us. We are all fellow sinners, and must feel like John Bunyan when we hear Professor Irving tell that they produced books carefully "explaining" Kant, etc., that is, in vulgar language, "giving the dope" to their students who were nevertheless expected to study for themselves. Still, in spite of such failings, as long as our students see the true philosophers face to face we have ground to hope that our fondness for our own version of truth will not interfere with philosophy's own enlightening work in the minds of youth. To judge by the Canadian record, the teachers of philosophy here have long wrought well and the result is manifest in the quality of the present contributions to intellectual history.

Such historical work is truly a philosophical achievement. The first requirement of historical research is that we should understand events of the past by reference to the particular circumstances of time and place as well as to the interests, motives, beliefs, and aspirations of the people who existed in these conditions. It is necessary to reinstate in imagination all these things as they actually were, and to do so from authentic facts of record. But our human desire for the knowledge of history is not satisfied simply by the imaginative recapitulation of old scenes and events. It is delightful, of course, to entertain ideal pictures of another time. We may enjoy a walk with Socrates on the banks of the Illisus, and under his spell join in the refrain, "Yes, even so"; or on another day go with Kant taking his eleven o'clock turn, in the very different climate of Königsberg; or on a Sunday evening gather in a session with Whitehead at Harvard. Yet such vignettes are not the fulfilment of historical inquiry. For we engage in historical study because we are prompted by an idea of some sort that starts us searching into the past, an idea of a *significance* in what has happened which has not yet been disclosed and understood. Thus we go back into the past in order to recover something that is illuminating for ourselves here and now. Our interest is forward-looking, even as we turn our attention backward, and con-

sequently it is fully satisfied only when we have grasped what we discover about the past *together with* the present and the still undefined future. An act of comprehension is thus involved. This synoptic activity is the philosophical moment in the study of history and it is essential to the fulfilment of man's interest in history. So Brett, who worked supremely well in this field of learning, rightly emphasized the "historical and synoptic method," and he taught it to these others who have since gained distinction.

Historical work so inspired has as much to do with contemporary thought and life as it has with the past. Such historical studies are genuine contributions to present-day philosophy. Indeed, their disclosures, what they find out about men and things, span all the distinctions of time, and in that sense they are disclosures of something universal, which is what genuine philosophy is at any time.

It is natural to expect that the character of philosophy in Canada will be most plainly revealed in those things that the Canadians do best. I shall begin here to draw a few conclusions which I regard, however, merely as hypotheses for our discussion.

There was an early indication of the distinctive character of this philosophy in the very first feature we noticed—that the Canadians appear to transcend nationalism in their thought. Now in politics we honour this kind of large vision by calling it "international." How shall we speak of it in the case of philosophy? I know nothing more honourable and appropriate to say than that their philosophy exemplifies the *humanistic* attitude and vision.

Their study of history is like that of Thucydides, who offered his research into the great fateful war of the Greeks so that men of all later times might profit from it and learn how they should conduct their lives as well as their great affairs of state in order to survive war and to live well. Are not philosophical studies of intellectual history, too, just such a *paideia*, lessons in understanding for man today, and for any time? This way of thinking, at once practical and universal in outlook, is characteristic of humanism.

It is natural that these philosophical scholars should have been led to study great sources of humanism in ancient civilization. Thus they perpetuate the humanistic tradition by their own fresh insights into its beginnings. But they do not stop there. Wherever the current of intellectual life has taken a significant turn in our civilization, owing to the appearance of a Bacon or Newton or Marx (and there is no confining the examples to the West; indeed Brett himself was an interested student of India), the humanistic philosophers will both study what actually happened and take the synoptic view so that a

universal meaning is disclosed which can be of value to man in any civilization.

And more follows. Whatever is essential to the *civilizing of man* becomes of engrossing interest to this kind of philosopher. For society itself is fundamental to all human existence, and the institutions of society constitute limiting conditions for almost the whole of human life. Inevitably those who are concerned about human values will proceed to inquire into the nature and working of society and try to discover the principles of a good social order. There have been two lines of study in social and political philosophy in Canada. On the one hand is the reinterpretation of the civilized tradition of government so that we can realize what it means for us today in terms of our own social experience. This is exemplified in the work of R. M. MacIver (formerly of Toronto), which leads on from the study of the state to the possibilities of community in its international form. The other line of work is almost entirely practical and concerned with effective action on the frontier problems of social and economic life in Canada, and it is illustrated in the endeavours of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, with which Gregory Vlastos (recently at Queen's) was at one time associated.

At the present moment Professor Irving sees an urgent task ahead for social philosophy, that it must bring the two lines of preoccupation into combination. The task is to study the relationship between values and fact and so to reach knowledge that will be really useful to the people of a democracy in making their political decisions.

The term "social philosophy," however, does not seem quite adequate to designate the kind of philosophical enterprise that is involved in this task. There is an older expression still in use in the universities, at least in the title both of a chair of philosophy and of an important course of study, an expression which is as old as philosophy itself in the English-speaking world—I mean "moral philosophy." And I now wish to use it in this place to define what is perhaps the fundamental character of the philosophy of Canada throughout the past hundred years and at the present time.

There has always been a moral philosophy in Canada, as there was earlier in Britain itself. The British tradition is continuous for centuries. Hobbes defined the need of a moral philosophy in his *Leviathan*. And Hume, who once professed himself to be so "alone and affrighted," opens his very carefully formulated *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* by affiliating his own work with the tradition of moral philosophy. Then there were the appointed professors of moral philosophy, Hutcheson and Adam Smith in Glasgow,

and T. H. Green in Oxford. Mill, whom Green fought so hard, was still moving in the same tradition, though in the nineteenth century the term "moral" tended to disappear, owing very likely to the fact that philosophy had become so identified with moral philosophy that there was no need to mention the adjective.

Moral philosophy was in its prime, however, in the eighteenth century, the age of man, preoccupied with human nature, human understanding, morals, government, art, criticism, and natural religion. All these interests in what concerned man had somehow to be gathered under one rubric. The term "natural philosophy" had been used for the whole of the study of physical nature, the signal example of which was Newton's *Principles of Natural Knowledge*. By contrast, then, "moral philosophy" was used to designate a similarly comprehensive knowledge of all the things relative to man, the things where man himself is implicated in the facts, where his opinions, tastes, judgment, reason, and will are in some way involved. Here was a field of experience where man's knowledge of himself could be of use for the improvement of his life, through education and political reform. Moral philosophy then comprised all that is the subject-matter of psychology, aesthetics and criticism, ethics, political and economic science, and the rudiments of sociology, and it made a consummate moral knowledge available for action aiming at the general welfare and happiness of mankind. It is not surprising, then, that the chairs of moral philosophy became posts of great honour and respectability in the English-speaking world.

That British tradition passed overseas to Canada in the mid-nineteenth century when the new universities were established in the East. A chair of moral philosophy was founded at McGill, and one of ethics and metaphysics at Toronto. Their incumbents were to be certain Scots and Englishmen who came over to carry on the humanistic work of philosophy. Indeed, so vital was the moral interest in this very University of Toronto that there has been provision for a professorship of ethics in every one of the constituent colleges.

Nowadays the whole field of the study of man and society has undergone a tremendous development that has shattered the earlier organization of knowledge in moral philosophy. Psychology, sociology, economics, political science, anthropology, and a multitude of special sciences have established their independent existence, and there is so much for each of them to discover, by the application of scientific method to human affairs, that they are kept occupied simply ascertaining the facts. They have specialized on factual material. Moral philosophy is left "holding the bag" with values. This separation of

the mutually indispensable modes of knowledge which have no meaning unless they are organically related to each other is itself a portentous fact about both our contemporary science and our philosophy. The need at this juncture is for a comprehensive philosophical view and interpretation. This is not to be gained simply by collecting these existing parts of knowledge into an aggregate; it requires analysis of them in their relationships and finding some unity of principle in terms of which the whole can be brought into intelligible form. That is precisely the function of moral philosophy, the thorough-going mastery of knowledge in terms of comprehensive principle. And it is always animated by the practical humanistic ideal of learning something that can be of use to man in the conduct of his personal and public affairs.

The contemporary theoretical task of moral philosophy is still to be performed, but meantime we should not ignore some very practical work that has already been done. Philosophy in Canada has long had a humanizing influence within the universities. While the requirements of the classical languages, Greek and Latin, were retained far longer here than in the United States, they were at last broken down under a secular pressure which could not be resisted; but the memory of the ancient integrations of knowledge has remained, and it has fallen to philosophy to do what it could toward a reconstruction. Grandiose theory the Canadian philosophers have not proclaimed but they have demonstrated in practice the role that philosophy plays. Let me take an example from the University of Toronto, in the work of G. S. Brett. He was as actively concerned with the understanding of science as he was with the classics. His history of psychology is but one sample of what he could do in the interpretation of the history of science. His former students testify to the "humanizing" influence of studying with him. His colleagues in the sciences appreciated this, too, and wanted their own students to learn philosophy from him. He commanded the confidence of scholars in the university outside his own faculty, and those especially who had high responsibility in the schools of engineering, medicine, and law went to him and besought him for courses of philosophy to meet the needs of their students. In the case of law, all candidates for the degree had to graduate from certain undergraduate courses in philosophy. Here is some evidence of philosophy doing good work within the orbit of university life, bringing its method and ideal of comprehensive knowledge into the experience of students destined for varied careers in the world.

Outside the university is the greater civil community into which the graduates carry whatever modicum of wisdom they may have acquired. The effect of higher education on public life in Canada is more noticeable than in our country. Learning enjoys an authority here, and philosophy, in particular, has always been highly esteemed. The people expect something of it. When Professor Irving was recounting the early years he quoted James Cappon's remark that "the idealism of Caird and Watson had a well-defined public," and he added that this was a "watchful and enquiring public." "Watchful" we can readily understand, since religious truth was at stake, but "inquiring" is another sort of characterization, and it is the distinctively philosophic trait.

But there is something in the community much more permanently significant than the interest and suffrage of an educated, literate circle. That is the constitution by which the whole people live, or rather those principles embodied in the system to which all adhere as fundamental to the Canadian way of life. Here I wish to revert to the question of nationalism with which I began. The reference I made earlier to trouble within the state would have been quite gratuitous and uncalled for had I not intended to draw from the discussion a tribute to the Canadian community as a whole.

In the first place we should note that in respect to philosophy itself there is a certain ground of community between French Canada and British Canada. The Catholic philosophy and the secular philosophy which we have here been reviewing have in common an ideal of universalism. It is characteristic of both that they transcend nationalism and concern themselves with humanity. The influence of both types of philosophical thinking is to lift up the eyes of men to something beyond a parochial or nationalistic conception of human life. We should remember that G. S. Brett and Etienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain all served Canada in this University. Mutual understanding and appreciation are possible so far as philosophy is concerned.

And there really is a larger "community" in this country so that we should think of it as truly one society. The constitution of Canada is not something that has been imposed by the greater power of an English-speaking population upon a French-speaking population; on the contrary, it has been established on the ground of principles recognized by all parties. The Canadians have a social order which rests upon the general acceptance of a policy of life by means of which they can all dwell together, work together, and prosper in a true

commonwealth. They are actually *one* in their basic philosophy of government. So the things that make for "disunity" are limited and controlled by that common philosophy of the Canadian community. I am not saying for a moment that this philosophy is the direct fruit of what philosophers have been teaching in universities or in the schools of the Church or even of the great books, whether of Aristotle, Aquinas, or Locke. The "web of government" for a whole nation is too complex and delicate a phenomenon to be ascribed to any particular master-weavers. Those who weave it largely remain anonymous, for it is the combined result of many different agencies in the life of the people. There is one pattern, however, which they all follow, and it is the conception of those cardinal human values by which the community should live—justice, liberty, tolerance. That is their implicit moral philosophy.

And we, too, in the United States do not differ from our neighbour in this regard. This kind of moral philosophy is also reflected in our principles of governance as a democratic people. We have problems of disunity, too, and a similar conception of how we may preserve and advance our essential unity. We Americans can be very proud and happy to be dwelling on the same continent with such neighbours who without any pride on their part can teach us how to practise the philosophy we profess and so help to strengthen us in spirit as we go along together in the perilous world of today.

THE FRAMEWORK OF *THE CANTERBURY TALES*

W. H. Clawson

FOR the purposes of this article, a framework or framing story is to be understood as a narrative which, however interesting in itself, was composed for the primary purpose of introducing and connecting a series of tales, which are the *raison d'être* of the whole work. Though it is outside my plan to trace the origin and growth of this literary genre, a few examples may be given.[1] In the oriental collections entitled *The Thousand and One Nights* and *The Seven Sages,* the stories are told in order to postpone the execution of a condemned person. In the first case, this is done by the device of interrupting each story at a critical point, with a promise to conclude it if the execution is put off for a day. In *The Seven Sages,* a work known in various forms in medieval Europe, a young prince, the son of a Roman emperor, has resisted the amorous advances of his stepmother and has been accused by her of assault and of plotting his father's death. Because she has put a spell upon him which makes it impossible for him to speak for seven days without losing his life, he is unable to refute the charge; but his seven wise tutors come to his assistance. Each evening the stepmother relates to the emperor a story that recalls the wiles of counsellors, and each morning one of the tutors tells a tale illustrating woman's cunning. They thus succeed in putting off the execution from day to day until the period of the spell is completed. When the prince can speak, he convinces the emperor of his own innocence and his stepmother's guilt and she suffers the fate she had planned for him. Both framing stories gain interest through suspense and the second imposes unity and didactic purpose on the tales it encloses.

There are other collections of stories of didactic intention which lack the element of suspense in the framing tale. Among these, *The Fables of Bidpai* and the *Disciplina Clericalis,* both of oriental origin, were accessible to medieval English readers. Here, moral precepts are imparted to a pupil by a wise teacher, and are illustrated by a series of tales. A very ingenious example of this type of framing story is to be found in the *Confessio Amantis* of John Gower, completed in 1390, when Chaucer was still at work on *The Canterbury Tales.* Gower's framework is based on a skilful combination of two allegori-

[1]This article is greatly indebted to Robert A. Pratt and Karl Young, "The Literary Framework of the *Canterbury Tales*," in W. F. Bryan and Germaine Dempster, *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (Chicago, 1941), 1-81.

cal themes, the seven deadly sins and courtly love. The poet makes his petition to Venus, under whose direction he confesses his sins to her priest, Genius, and is warned against each sin by a series of tales. This schematized allegory is worked out with great precision and gives admirable unity to the poem as a whole, the pleasing effect of which is increased by the neatness of the versification and the unpretending clarity of the style. Chaucer made a somewhat similar use of love-allegory in his *Legend of Cupid's Saints,* a martyrology of famous classical heroines who died for love. In an introductory vision the task is imposed on him by the god of love as penance for his alleged offence in relating the disloyalty of Criseyde. But there are no links between the stories, and after nine had been written Chaucer gave up the plan and began *The Canterbury Tales.*

We are now to consider the type of frame-story in which a series of tales is related by a member or members of a social group for purposes of entertainment. Among the many devices employed by Ovid as a setting for the stories of his *Metamorphoses* there are several examples of stories told by members of a group. At the beginning of Book IV, the three daughters of King Minyas of Thebes, who disbelieve in the divinity of Bacchus, have met in their house on the day of his festival to defy his authority by spinning and weaving. To pass the time, each relates a story: the death of Pyramus and Thisbe, the love of Mars and Venus, the transformation of Hermaphroditus. There is some discussion between the stories. In the end, the girls are transformed into bats by the angry god. The episode might have suggested to Boccaccio and to Chaucer the device of stories told by a group.

Such a device appears as an episode in Boccaccio's earliest work, the *Filocolo,* a long prose version of the French romance of *Floris and Blanchefleur,* which he addressed to his mistress, Maria d'Aquino. Florio, son of the king of Spain, has been separated by his parents from his beloved Biancofiore, a Saracen captive. Travelling under the name of Filocolo in search of her, with several companions, he is detained by storms at Naples, where he and his friends are invited to join a gay company of ladies and gentlemen assembled in a garden. The leader of the group, Fiametta (Boccaccio's name for his lady) suggests that the thirteen members of the company shall each in turn propose a problem of love. A presiding officer is to discuss and give the answer to each problem, and Fiametta is unanimously chosen. It is clear that this episode was the preliminary sketch from which Boccaccio developed the framework of the *Decameron.* The pleasant garden, the gracious social background, the presiding queen,

the stories or situations presented in turn by each of the company, connected by discussion, and unified by a common theme, follow essentially the same scheme as that of the more famous work.[2] Two of the stories were retold in the *Decameron,* and one of these, on the theme of the Lady's Rash Promise, as told in the *Filocolo,* is held by many scholars to be the source of the tale of Chaucer's Franklin. In fact, Chaucer's detailed acquaintance with the *Filocolo* and his indebtedness to it, not only for this story, but also for many details of the meeting of Troilus and Criseyde at the house of Pandarus, seem to have been definitely established by the studies of Young, Lowes, and Tatlock.[3] It is therefore conceivable that Chaucer derived the general idea of a series of framed tales from Boccaccio's youthful work.

It should be noted, however, that a closer parallel to Chaucer's scheme exists in an episode of Boccaccio's pastoral romance, the *Ameto,* written about 1341. Here a company of seven nymphs meet in a wooded meadow to entertain one another by a series of tales on a common theme, under the direction of a presiding officer, the huntsman Ameto; and they are brought together by a special religious occasion, a festival of Venus. Ameto calls on each nymph in turn, and in the intermissions he comments on each story. Five of the nymphs relate tales of their unhappiness in marriage to an unloved husband and of the consolation each obtained by an affair with a youthful lover. The confession of one nymph definitely resembles the marital experiences of the Wife of Bath and of the ill-assorted couple of the Merchant's Tale, but in view of the widespread occurrence of this theme in medieval literature, the similarities are not close enough to prove Chaucer's indebtedness.[4]

Except for the limited number of the tales and their restriction to a single day, the *Ameto* episode resembles the *Decameron* framework, agreeing with it in four ways: the tales are told in succession by members of an organized group; this group is brought together by special external circumstances; there are narrative and conver-

[2]See Pio Rajna, "L'Episodio delle Questioni d'Amore nel *Filocolo* del Boccaccio," *Romania,* XXXI, 1902, 28-81. For the episode see Giovanni Boccaccio, *Il Filocolo,* a cura di Salvatore Battaglia (Bari, 1938), 287-366.

[3]Karl Young, *The Origin and Development of the Story of Troilus and Criseyde,* Chaucer Society, Second Series, 40 (London, 1908); J. L. Lowes, "The *Franklin's Tale,* the *Teseide,* and the *Filocolo*," *Modern Philology,* XV, 1918, 689-728; J. S. P. Tatlock, *The Scene of the Franklin's Tale Visited,* Chaucer Society, Second Series, 51 (London, 1914). See also Pio Rajna, "Le Origini della novella narrata dal 'Frankeleyn' nei *Canterbury Tales* del Chaucer," *Romania,* XXXII, 1903, 204-67.

[4]See Pratt and Young, in Bryan and Dempster, *Sources and Analogues,* 11-13; Bryan and Dempster, *ibid.,* 339-40; J. S. P. Tatlock, "Boccaccio and the Plan of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*," *Anglia,* XXXVII, 1913, 69-117.

sational links between the tales; there is a presiding officer. Now in these four essential features, the *Decameron* is in agreement with *The Canterbury Tales*. The general tone of the framing narrative of the *Decameron* and the general topics of its tales are very similar to those of Chaucer: four of Boccaccio's tales are analogues of four of Chaucer's; and in Boccaccio's apology for the impropriety of some of his stories he makes the same defence as that offered by Chaucer for the same fault—that he must tell what happened, that the reader may skip any tale that he wishes, and that such stories are purely for entertainment and are not to be taken too seriously. However there are no verbal parallels, and the resemblances might be due to coincidence.[5]

The majority of Chaucer scholars hold that the indebtedness of *The Canterbury Tales* to the *Decameron* is not established. There is no convincing evidence that Chaucer derived his Clerk's Tale from any source but Petrarch's Latin version and a French translation of this.[6] He attributes the tale only to Petrarch; and, though he must have possessed and closely studied manuscripts of the *Filocolo, Filostrato,* and *Teseida,* he never mentions Boccaccio's name. There is no evidence that Chaucer met Boccaccio during his brief visit to Florence in 1373, and even had the meeting taken place, it is doubtful whether the Italian author would have mentioned the *Decameron,* with which for many years he had been out of sympathy, and which he seems to have endeavoured to suppress. There is some reason to believe that Chaucer never saw a copy of the *Decameron,* and his indebtedness to it must at most be regarded as not proven.[7] However, an examination of this famous work, so close to Chaucer in point of time, so similar in structure, content, and spirit, and so comparable in artistic achievement, should aid us in forming an estimate of Chaucer's narrative art in the Canterbury framework.[8]

The framing narrative of the *Decameron* is superbly constructed. It begins with a grimly realistic description of Florence during the great plague of 1348, recounting in sober detail the symptoms of the disease and its fatal effects not only on men but on animals, the fruit-

[5]See Tatlock, *ibid.;* L. Morsbach, "Chaucers Plan der *Canterbury Tales* und Boccaccios *Decameron*," *Englische Studien,* XLII, 1910, 43-52; Hubertis M. Cummings, *The Indebtedness of Chaucer's Works to the Italian Works of Boccaccio,* University of Cincinnati Studies, Series 2, 10 (1915-18), 33-42; other references by Pratt and Young, in Bryan and Dempster, *Sources and Analogues,* 14, note 1.

[6]J. Burke Severs, "The Clerk's Tale, Introduction," *ibid.,* 288-90.

[7]See W. E. Farnham, "England's Discovery of the *Decameron*," *Publications of the Modern Language Association,* XXXIX, 1924, 123-9; Pratt and Young, in Bryan and Dempster, *Sources and Analogues,* 20 and note 1.

[8]A. F. Massera, ed., Giovanni Boccaccio, *Il Decameron,* Scrittori d'Italia (2 vols., Bari, 1927).

less search for remedies, the abandoning of the sick and dying in their houses through fear of infection, the break-down of moral restraints, the collection of bodies, the mass funerals by torchlight, the heaping of the corpses in common graves. At the height of this disaster, seven young ladies of birth and breeding, all of them friends and some related, happen to meet after morning service in the church of Santa Maria Novella. After some conversation, the eldest, Pampinea, points out that in their desperate situation, bereaved of their relatives and exposed to the danger of infection and the disorders of the city, both nature and reason prompt them to save their lives. She proposes that they retire in a body to one of their country estates, taking such servants as they may still have. These villas are well stored with supplies, and there the isolation and the fresh country air will save them from the plague and fortify their spirits. All consider the plan reasonable, but hesitate to adopt it without male advice and protection. At this point, three young men of their own social circle enter the church; and since they are known to be honourable and trustworthy, they are invited to join in the venture. Next morning at dawn the party sets out, accompanied by three maid-servants and four men-servants, seventeen persons in all.

A walk of two short miles brings them to a palace at some distance from the road, with spacious halls and chambers and surrounded by meadows and gardens. Here, on the initiative of Pampinea, it is decided to choose each day a king or queen, with authority over the party for that day. This director is to nominate a successor, who shall rule from that evening to the next, and so on until all have shared the honour and responsibility. After Pampinea has been elected the first queen, and crowned with a wreath of laurel, the morning is spent in amusements and an early dinner. Then follows a midday rest, and in the afternoon all assemble in a shady spot, where they pass the heat of the day in the telling of stories. Each of the ten contributes a tale when called upon, and on this day the queen's tale comes last. The evening ends with supper, instrumental music, dancing, and the singing of a *canzone* by one of the company. The same programme is continued on each day on which stories are told, until each of the party has held the office of king or queen and each has told ten stories. It is then proposed and agreed upon that they return to their responsibilities in Florence.

From the preceding outline, we note the neatness and symmetry of Boccaccio's plan. One hundred stories are told in ten days, ten on each day, one by each member of a group of ten. The events of each day follow a general pattern. The whole gracious and charming

picture is framed by the horror and distress of the stricken city, which form a powerful contrast to the beauty and freshness of the sheltered gardens and the gaiety of the company.

It has sometimes been said that in comparison to the framework of *The Canterbury Tales* that of the *Decameron* lacks movement, that it is a static and monotonous account of a group that sits in a circle and tells stories from day to day. We find, however, that the story-tellers do not remain in the same place, but transfer their headquarters more than once, so that their expedition involves a number of short journeys. Moreover, they are absent from Florence two full weeks and do not spend every day in story-telling. They set out on Wednesday and tell stories that afternoon and the next. Friday is spent in religious devotions, and on Saturday the ladies wash their hair. On Sunday morning, lest they be disturbed by other refugees from the city, they move to another palace, two miles west of the first. They then dine and tell stories beside a marble fountain in a walled garden. Here are related the tales of the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth days, from Sunday to Wednesday. On Wednesday evening, the tales having been finished early, the ladies walk a mile to explore a delightful valley, surrounded by wooded hills and watered by a stream which expands into a small lake. In this lake all bathe before returning to the palace. After supper the three gentlemen also visit the spot, and one of them, who is king for the next day, directs that the whole company shall dine and tell stories there. On Friday and Saturday, as in the former week, no stories are told. On the second Sunday of their absence, all attend mass in a little neighbouring church, after which the usual routine is followed, and also on Monday and Tuesday, the ninth and tenth days. On Wednesday morning, a fortnight from their departure, all return to Florence.

These short journeys give life, charm, and variety to the narrative. The minor events and the conversation to which they give rise help to characterize the members of the company. There is some differentiation of these persons, but only a few emerge with any vividness of individuality. Dioneo adds vitality to the narrative by his daring jests and comments and his lively good humour. He obtains the privilege of telling any tale he pleases no matter what subject has been assigned, and after the first day he is allowed to speak last, because it is realized that he wants to maintain the spirits of the company by ending each day with a merry tale. When it is his turn to sing a *canzone,* he persists in offering to sing various ribald songs, instead of the courtly love-song that is required, until he is sharply called to order by the queen. Low comedy is provided by a quarrel

between two of the attendants in which an elderly woman, something like the Wife of Bath, pungently rebukes one of the men-servants for professing to understand the wiles of her sex. There is nothing resembling the characterizing portraits of Chaucer's General Prologue, though there is a slight but charming sketch of one of the ladies, Fiametta, of which Maria d'Aquino was probably the model; the love-stricken Filostrato may be Boccaccio himself.

Though the characters of the *Decameron* framework are not well-rounded personalities, they are sufficiently individualized to provide a measure of variety. The social background, on the other hand, helps to give the framework unity. The tale-tellers are all of one social class, members of the same circle, intimate friends. The manners and ideals are those of gentlefolk; there is an inherent graciousness and courtesy in speech and action. In spite of occasional liberty in discussing some of the stories and in spite of the coarseness of many of them, the general tone of conversation is decorous and conduct is unexceptionable. The stories themselves supply vivid pictures of every social class in every part of Italy, and they range also over France, England, and many Mediterranean countries.

Unity and symmetrical arrangement are supplied by the grouping of the stories. Except on the first and ninth days, each tale-teller (with the exception of Dioneo) is required to relate his or her story to a single theme. Day II, with stories treating of unfortunate persons who unexpectedly achieve happiness, is devoted mainly to tales of separation and recovery, after the style of the Greek romances. Day III is occupied with successful love-intrigues; several are of the fabliau type; others, such as the story of Giletta of Narbonne and the Count of Rousillon (related again in Shakespeare's *All's Well*) belong to the category of romance. The tales of Day IV, "on those whose love had an unhappy ending," are romance with a tragic cast, such as those of Tancred and Ghismunda and Isabella and the Pot of Basil. As a relief from these, Day V introduces stories that begin in misfortune and end happily, such as the noble one of Federigo degli Alberghi and his sacrifice of his favourite falcon in the service of his lady. The anecdotes of Day VI include the delightful one of the preaching friar displaying his relics, like Chaucer's pardoner, to a country congregation. On Days VII and VIII, the story-tellers, with their tricks played by wives on husbands and husbands on wives, return to the fabliau themes. Day X ends the series on a lofty moral plane with stories of heroic virtue such as the nobility of husband and lover in the tale of the Lady's Rash Promise and the superhuman resolution of Griselda.

To sum up, the framework of the *Decameron* is characterized by unity, balance, and symmetry. Variety is supplied by action and movement, by some individualization of the tale-tellers, and by a wide range of content in the tales. The narrators are all of one class, the gentry of Florence, though all classes and all regions of Italy appear in the stories. The charming surroundings of the tale-telling are framed by the sombreness of a great disaster. The prevailing tone, however, is one of gaiety and good breeding and the freedom of language and content in some of the stories is tempered by reason and self-control. The style is occasionally formal, but usually clear, natural, and spontaneous. The tales are sufficiently connected, not only by grouping into themes but also by brief comments and the occasional suggestion of a story by that which precedes.

Before proceeding to *The Canterbury Tales,* we must consider another collection of stories, the *Novelle* of Giovanni Sercambi of Lucca.[9] In its original form, the *Novelliero,* now lost, it included 100 stories and was composed in 1374. The later version, extant in one incomplete manuscript of the fifteenth century, was completed not earlier than December 19, 1385. It contains 155 stories with a *proemio* and *intermezzi.* It has not yet been edited as a whole, though most of the tales are in print and the *proemio* and parts of the *intermezzi* have been included in Bryan and Dempster's *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.*

This collection is an imitation of the *Decameron,* but certain features bring it closer to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.* A large company of people of many callings and social classes sets out on foot from the city of Lucca on a journey through the principal cities of Italy in order to avoid the pestilence that has attacked their city. At a meeting in the principal church, a certain wealthy citizen, Aluisi, proposes the election of a leader and is at once chosen by all for that office. He makes arrangements for their food, lodging, and entertainment, and calls on various members of the company for tales, music, and moral instruction. The tales are sometimes told as the travellers walk along the road and sometimes at the inns after the evening meal. This is a more realistic arrangement than Chaucer's device of tales told to a band of twenty-nine pilgrims on horseback. A second difference from Chaucer's scheme is that all the tales are related by the same person, Giovanni Sercambi himself, while Chaucer modestly assigns to himself only *Sir Thopas* and *Melibeus.* Another difference is that in the *Novelle* there are no characterizing portraits of the travellers and scarcely any entertaining incidents

[9]See Pratt and Young, in Bryan and Dempster, *Sources and Analogues,* 20-81.

on the way that might bring out character by action. The framing story is in part a tedious and detailed narrative of routine events. Its chief merit is that of a contemporary account of travel in fourteenth-century Italy with some description of the ancient buildings, churches, and shrines of the principal cities. There is little humour except for the occasion on which Aluisi falls asleep during the telling of a tale and, being roused by the laughter of the travellers, calls for another tale that will keep him awake. Not infrequently the tale-teller directs his story to one group of the pilgrims such as merchants, judges, despairing lovers, jealous husbands, but in a general and impersonal way. In short, the framing narrative has none of the sparkle and charm exhibited by Boccaccio and Chaucer, and the resemblances to Chaucer are broad and general.

Whether Chaucer was indebted to Sercambi for any of these parallels is a question that cannot be answered. He passed through Lucca on his first Italian journey in 1373 and could there have met Sercambi—a not unimportant person—and have heard of his plan; and he could have heard of or seen the first form of the work during his second journey in 1378, since he was then in Milan, which had political relations with Lucca; or he might have seen the second form of the work between 1385 and 1387, when he is thought to have begun *The Canterbury Tales.* A few of Sercambi's tales are analogues to tales in Chaucer (e.g. the Shipman's), but the resemblances are insufficient to prove indebtedness. We must conclude that, while a connection is not impossible, Chaucer, who lived in Kent for some time after 1385-6, did not need suggestions from anyone for the idea of tales told by pilgrims on the road to Canterbury.

This idea of a pilgrimage as the occasion for the telling of a sequence of stories was one of the happiest devices of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.* The religious motive of a pilgrimage made possible the coming together on a friendly footing of representatives of many social classes; and the relative safety and cheapness of such a form of travel, especially to so famous and long-established a shrine as Canterbury, promoted a holiday spirit which encouraged music and story-telling and led to the free exchange of opinions and confidences. Thus through his adoption of the pilgrimage device Chaucer was enabled to make of his General Prologue an unsurpassed social document and of his framing narrative a true human comedy.

The General Prologue presents a social group of thirty persons, larger and more diversified than the ten gentlefolk of the *Decameron,* smaller and more manageable than Sercambi's indefinitely large company. Chaucer's group of pilgrims is not schematically repre-

sentative of English society but covers well enough the main social elements. The nobility and the lowest class of labourers are excluded as unlikely to travel in the fashion of this group; but the knights, the learned professions, the landed gentry, the medieval manor (through its miller and reeve), and the free agricultural labourers are all represented. The rising middle classes are well exhibited by the London merchant, preoccupied with foreign commerce, the five tradesmen with aldermanic ambitions, Harry Bailey, solid citizen and innkeeper of Southwark, and by the London cook and manciple. From the provinces come the expert cloth-weaver, Alison of Bath, and the daring sea-captain of Dartmouth. The portraits of the clergy (nearly one-third of the company) are significant for the tolerance with which Chaucer points out the foibles of the monastic orders in describing the Monk and Prioress; his greater severity in satirizing the worldliness of the Friar; and his open attack on the corrupt Summoner and the fraudulent Pardoner. His ideal portraits of the Clerk of Oxford and the Parish Priest, along with his equally favourable descriptions of the Knight and the Ploughman, perhaps reflect his own admiration at a time of changing standards of the basic ideals of earlier medieval society, as they had found expression in its fundamental classes—the men of prayer, the men of war, and the men of labour.[10]

An even more distinctive feature of the General Prologue is its method of characterization. Each of the pilgrims who is described is revealed in such sharp and clear detail that we feel personally acquainted with him or her as an individual, and at the same time we recognize him as representative, not only of a social class, but of a type of character which may be recognized in any country and in any age. Nothing like this series of portraits had ever appeared in literature. It is the main reason for the perennial appeal of the General Prologue. Any analysis of these portraits must be inadequate to account for their extraordinary charm. They range from sixty-two lines (the Friar) to nine lines (the Cook), and the average is thirty lines. Within this space, not a word is wasted: details of physical appearance, dress and equipment, social rank, and character evoke the whole man or woman by powerful suggestive strokes:

[10] "þæt bið þonne cyninges andweorc ond his tol mid to ricsianne, þæt he hæbbe his lond fullmonad; he sceal habban gebedmen ond fyrdmen ond weorcmen. Hwæt, þu wast þætte butan þissan tolan nan cyning his cræft ne mæg cyðan." King Alfred's Old English version of Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae*, ed. W. J. Sedgefield (Oxford, 1899), chap. XVII, 40.

A sheef of pecok arwes, bright and kene,
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily,
(Wel koude he dresse his takel yemanly:
His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe)
And in his hand he baar a myghty bowe.
A not heed hadde he, with a broun visage.
Of wodecraft wel koude he al the usage.[11]

His nosethirles blake were and wyde.
A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde.
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.
He was a janglere and a goliardeys,
And that was moost of synne and harlotries.
Wel koude he stelen corn and tollen thries.[12]

No small part of the realism of these portraits is their informality, their lack of regular order. We find now a detail of dress or equipment: "His bootes souple, his hors in greet estaat"; now an habitual significant action: "And evere he rood the hyndreste of oure route"; now a significant speech: "He wolde the see were kept for any thyng Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle"; now a sharply drawn physical detail: "His nekke whit was as the flour-de-lys"; now a brief statement of character: "And al was conscience and tendre herte." Yet such apparently haphazard details were certainly deliberately planned to produce that effect of spontaneity that creates a sense of intimate acquaintance with each pilgrim. Manly has established the point that Chaucer drew some of the characters from real persons of his acquaintance; he has put forth a convincing argument in the case of the Host, the Prioress, the Sergeant of the Law, the Franklin, the Reeve, and the Shipman, and has established a probability for the Knight, the Miller, the Summoner, the Friar, the Pardoner, and the Wife of Bath. He carefully guarded himself from asserting that these characters were mere photographs of individuals, but he opposed the idea that they were artificial compilations, intended to present a schematized picture of medieval society. "From the experiences and observations of his life, his imagination derived the materials for its creative processes."[13]

Chaucer's characterization of the pilgrims is carried still further in the continually moving narrative of the links between the tales. The devices by which Chaucer maintains the freshness, variety, and

[11] *Canterbury Tales,* I (A) 104-10. All quotations from Chaucer are taken from the *Complete Works,* ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston, 1933) with the exception of the quotation on page 152.

[12] *Canterbury Tales,* I (A) 558-62.

[13] J. M. Manly, *Some New Light on Chaucer* (New York, 1926), 263.

liveliness of this background are natural and entertaining; and most important of all is the role of the Host. He dominates almost every episode along the road to Canterbury. His dignity, his independence, his experience as an innkeeper, his geniality, his tact admirably qualify him for the leadership of a personally conducted tour; and the way in which he meets the various minor and major crises of the journey gives continuous dramatic interest to the links. His sense of social values prompts him to arrange that the Knight shall tell the first tale and to call on the Monk to follow; but when the Miller insists on being heard instead, the Host yields the point to avoid a disturbance because he sees that the man is drunk. Yet ordinarily he maintains a firm rein, warns against loss of time, and stops any pilgrim who wanders from the point. He adapts his tone to the person he addresses, is respectful to the Knight and Man of Law, courtly to the Prioress, encouraging to the shy and aloof Clerk, bluff with the Cook. In order to keep the company entertained he jests good-humouredly with the Monk and the Priest, and he ridicules Chaucer in order to dissipate the sober mood created by the Prioress's Tale. Alert to prevent quarrels, he checks the bickering of the Friar and Summoner and reconciles the Manciple and Cook; and when he becomes involved in an angry exchange of abuse with the Pardoner he readily yields to the Knight's intervention as a peacemaker.

The Host does not let the company forget that he is the judge of the tales:

> And wel I woot the substance is in me,
> If any thyng shal wel reported be.[14]

His comments on the tales keep the general scheme in mind, and further reveal his personality. His literary tastes are conservative. He cannot understand the delicate and whimsical irony of Chaucer's parody of the romances in *Sir Thopas:* "Now swich a rym the devel I biteche!"; and he demands the substitution of a tale, "in which ther be som murthe or som doctryne." The Man of Law's Tale, which included both entertainment and instruction, had suited him exactly: "This was a thrifty tale for the nones!" And he is well pleased with the moral allegory of Chaucer's *Melibeus*—partly, however, because the peace-loving Dame Prudence offered such a pleasing contrast to his own formidable wife, Goodelief.[15] The Host prefers humorous to tragic stories. The Shipman's and the Nun's Priest's

[14] *Canterbury Tales,* VII 2803-4 (B 3993-4).
[15] *Ibid.,* VII 1893-6 (B 3083-6). See Edith Rickert, " 'Goode Lief, My Wyf,' " *Modern Philology,* XXV (1927), 79-82.

Tales are highly commended; but he strongly supports the Knight's interruption of the Monk's tragedies, agreeing with his preference for stories with a happy ending. Indeed he is so distressed by the Physician's story of Virginia that nothing can restore him but a drink or a ribald tale.

Another dramatic element of the framing narrative is the constant introduction of quarrels and disputes. These are sometimes motivated by occupational jealousy as in the case of the Miller and the Reeve, who are often brought into conflict through their duties in connection with the medieval manor, and of the Cook and the Manciple, who are rival caterers. The Friar and Summoner are also natural rivals, in that both are expert in winning money from the laity in various unscrupulous ways. The chief item of dispute that runs through several stages of the journey is the age-old war of the sexes, which perhaps begins with the Host's allusion to his wife's love of domination, is lightly touched on in the Nun's Priest's tale of Pertelote and Chauntecleer, and rises to the importance of a discussion or debate in the Wife of Bath's frank statement of her heretical opinions on matrimony and the different replies that these call forth from the Clerk, the Merchant, and the Franklin.[16]

Still another dramatic artifice employed in the links and prologues is what might be called the confession. Based perhaps on a literary convention which appears in the *Roman de la Rose* and in the Elizabethan soliloquy, the device is here made natural through the confidential mood inspired by the pilgrimage. The Franklin as well as the Host reveal their domestic troubles on one or two occasions; but the outstanding examples of this form of self-revelation are the Wife of Bath's Prologue, the Pardoner's Prologue, and the Canon's Yeoman's Prologue, with the first part of his tale. In each case a strongly individualized personality intimately reveals his or her principles and practice, however contrary to accepted morality; each then enforces these statements of experience by the authority of a tale by way of exemplum;[17] and each evokes a dramatic response from other pilgrims. The Wife of Bath's account of how she won the mastery of her five husbands, with its accompanying tale of woman's sovereignty, precipitates the different kinds of irony displayed by the Clerk and the Merchant. The Pardoner's cynical confession of avarice, lechery, and gluttony, contrasted with his elo-

[16]G. L. Kittredge, "Chaucer's Discussion of Marriage," *ibid.*, IX, 1912, 435-67.

[17]See Bartlett J. Whiting, "The Wife of Bath's Tale," in Bryan and Dempster, *Sources and Analogues,* 223.

quent sermon against these sins, ends in a scene variously interpreted by the critics but accepted by all as tensely dramatic.[18] In the Canon's Yeoman's Prologue and the preliminary part of his tale, this semi-learned confederate of a shabby alchemist, who has joined the pilgrims in the hope of getting some money to realize his dream of achieving the transmutation of elements, finally sees that his sales talk will never convince the Host or the other pilgrims. He then breaks down and frankly describes in copious detail the constant failure of their experiments and the hopelessness of attaining their end. His tale itself is not about his own master, who seems to have been a deluded enthusiast, but about another alchemist who swindled an unsuspecting priest; at the end, he declares that the secret of alchemy will never be revealed except by the will of God.[19]

To show that the personalities so clearly brought before us in the Prologue and the links are further revealed in the tales would take us beyond the limitations of our subject. It must suffice to note that only two of the tales are definitely known to have been written before the work was undertaken;[20] that all the tales are sufficiently appropriate to their tellers; and that a good many of them—such, for example, as the Miller's and Reeve's, the Prioress's, the Wife of Bath's, the Friar's, the Summoner's, and the Pardoner's—were certainly written with the purpose of more fully illustrating these characters. It may be added that Chaucer's tales even more than Boccaccio's afford illustrations of every important genre in medieval literature, including not only fabliau and romance but also saint's legend, sermon, and medieval tragedy. (Saint's legend and sermon appear in Boccaccio satirically, not seriously.)

It remains to consider the over-all structure of *The Canterbury Tales,* with some reference to that of the *Decameron.* Boccaccio's work, we have seen, is admirably organized. On the other hand, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* is unfinished; and this fact may not be due only to pressure of business or illness. Chaucer began several works that he left uncompleted, sometimes with no clear indication how he would have worked them out. Kemp Malone says: "Chaucer was not the man to worry much about loose ends, and he was not always careful to make things neat and tidy."[21] He adds, however, that "the easy conversational effect would infallibly be missed if

[18]G. G. Sedgewick, "The Progress of Chaucer's Pardoner, 1880-1940," *Modern Language Quarterly,* I, 431-58.

[19]See S. Foster Damon, "Chaucer and Alchemy," *PMLA,* XXXIX, 1924, 782-8.

[20]See *The Legend of Good Women,* Prologue, F 420-1; 426.

[21]Kemp Malone, "Style and Structure in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales,*" *English Literary History,* XIII, 1946, 43-4.

everything was in order." Perhaps Chaucer was not much concerned because he was leaving his tales without having fitted them all neatly together; nevertheless, it is reasonable to suppose that had he lived he would have imposed on them some consecutive order. In none of the fifty-seven complete or nearly complete manuscripts is there a continuous narrative of the whole journey. Instead, they present a number of connected narratives of certain stages of the journey, in which are incorporated one or more of the tales. In some of these units or fragments there are indications of time and of places passed on the road. In such an unfinished state the work was left by Chaucer at his death in 1400, and the manuscripts that we have show the efforts of various editors and copyists to piece the fragments together.[22] There is an extraordinary variety in the placing of these fragments, but they may be divided roughly into two orders. The first is that of the Ellesmere manuscript and a number of others, and is followed in the edition of Professor F. N. Robinson. This order is perfectly consistent, as far as time references go, with the realities of a journey to Canterbury, which would occupy three or perhaps four days, but it involves one error as to places. The sequence that begins with the Wife of Bath refers to the approach of the pilgrims to a place called Sittingbourne, which is about forty miles from London; and a later fragment, extending from the Shipman's Tale to the Nun's Priest's Tale, says that the company is approaching Rochester, only thirty miles from London. It seems incredible that Chaucer would have allowed this inconsistency to stand had he lived to complete the work.

In another and larger group of manuscripts the place references are even less satisfactory, the marriage-debate sequence beginning with the Wife of Bath is broken into its elements and rearranged in various ways, and, moreover, many of the links between tales are distorted or spurious. Most scholars regard these differences as the work of copyists.[23] However, there is one link, not occurring in the first order of manuscripts, that connects the Man of Law's Tale with that of the Squire. The Host has just called on the Parson to follow the Man of Law with a tale, but is rebuked by the Parson for enforcing his request with an oath. The Host, in annoyance, calls him a Lollard:

[22]See John M. Manly and Edith Rickert, *The Text of the Canterbury Tales Studied on the Basis of All Known Manuscripts* (Chicago, 1940), II, 474-94, "The Order of Tales"; J. S. P. Tatlock, "The *Canterbury Tales* in 1400," *PMLA*, L, 1935, 100-39.

[23]But see Carleton Brown, "The Evolution of the Canterbury Marriage Group," *ibid.*, XLVIII, 1933, 1041-59; "Author's Revision in the *Canterbury Tales*," *ibid.*, LVII, 1942, 29-50.

"I smelle a Loller in the wynd," quod he.
"Now! goode men," quod oure Host, "herkeneth me;
Abideth for Goddes digne passion,
For we shal have a predication;
This Loller here wol prechen us somwhat."
"Nay, by my fader soule, that shal he nat!"
Seyde the Squyer; "Here shal he not preche;
He shal no gospel glosen here ne teche.
We leeven alle in the grete God," quod he;
"He wolde sowe som difficulte,
Or springen cokkel in oure clene corn.
And therfore, Hoost, I warne the biforn,
My joly body shal a tale telle,
And I shal clinken with so mery a belle
That I shall waken al this companie.
But it shal be of no philosophie,
Ne phislyas ne termes queynte of lawe.
There is but litel Latyn in my mawe."[24]

Now these dramatic lines are certainly Chaucer's, but he cannot have assigned such a rude speech to the exquisitely courteous Squire. They must have been intended for one of the rougher members of the company, and indeed in a few manuscripts they are assigned to the Summoner; but this must also be a scribal mistake, since the Summoner was fond of quoting legal terms in Latin. However, one manuscript, the Selden, of no great authority, it is true, assigns the speech to the Shipman, and it must be admitted that it perfectly fits the character of that bluff, daring seaman; moreover it has been noted acutely that there is no other pilgrim whose name begins with an S, except the Sergeant of the Law, who had just finished his tale. The Chaucer Society editors therefore assumed that the Selden scribe had hit on Chaucer's intention. They accordingly attached the Shipman's Tale and its whole sequence to the Man of Law's Tale, thus correcting the place references of the Ellesmere group by bringing Rochester before Sittingbourne and at the same time giving the tale an appropriate prologue. The resulting order of the tales is that found in the Skeat and Globe editions, and though it is doubtless based on subjective instead of strict textual criticism it does afford a reasonable view of the plan of *The Canterbury Tales* as

[24]This extract from the Man of Law's end-link is quoted (with modern punctuation) from J. M. Manly, *Canterbury Tales* (New York, 1928), 571. He prints the end-link from the Lichfield MS. Since he follows the Ellesmere order of the *Tales* he omits this link from the text and prints it in his notes, pointing out (p. 573) that Chaucer could not have intended the Squire to be the speaker. Robinson, who also adheres to the Ellesmere order, inserts the link after the Man of Law's Tale in square brackets, with the reading "Shipman," as in the Selden MS, instead of "Squyer"; and he follows it with the Wife of Bath's Tale. Skeat and the Globe edition read "Shipman" and place the link between the Man of Law's Tale and the Shipman's Tale.

Chaucer was gradually working it out on the basis of the preliminary sketch of the General Prologue.[25]

The Chaucer Society editors had less ground for shifting the Physician—Pardoner sequence from a position towards the end of the journey to one immediately preceding the Wife of Bath's Tale. This shift was made in an effort to fit their theory as to the number of days occupied by the pilgrimage, but there is little evidence to support the change. Chaucer has not really supplied enough time references to indicate whether two or three nights were spent on the road, and he might not have considered this necessary. He did achieve, however, a very effective ending.

In the General Prologue the Host proposes and all agree that each of the twenty-nine pilgrims shall tell two stories on the road to Canterbury and two on the return journey and that he who is judged to have told the best story shall be awarded a supper at the Tabard Inn. Had Chaucer completed the work we may assume that he would have given an account of the stay of the pilgrims at Canterbury as well as of the final supper in Southwark. It may be noted that two of Chaucer's fifteenth-century followers wrote accounts of the Canterbury visit. Lydgate, in the preface to his *Siege of Thebes* in 1420, brought himself into the company, telling how he joined them at Canterbury and related the Theban story as the first tale of the homeward journey.[26] An unknown monk of Canterbury, in a narrative found in the Northumberland manuscript of *The Canterbury Tales,* gives a detailed account of the devotions of the pilgrims at the shrine, of their sight-seeing in the town, and of certain farcical adventures of the Pardoner at the inn; and he follows this with the Merchant's Tale of Beryn, as the first tale of the return journey.[27] Chaucer, however, ended his work as the pilgrims approached Canterbury, with his original scheme not half completed. Only one of the company, Chaucer himself, had told two stories; twenty-one others had told one story apiece (one of these unfinished); one story, the Canon's Yeoman's, had not been provided for in the Host's scheme; and seven pilgrims (the Yeoman, the Ploughman, and the five burgesses) had told no stories at all. The last story in all the complete manuscripts is that of the Parson. In

[25]But see Manly and Rickert, *The Text of the Canterbury Tales,* II, 490-2. In their text the reading is: "Seyde the somnour" (III, 230). See also II, 188-90 and V, 550-2.

[26]See Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes,* ed. Axel Erdmann, Chaucer Society, Second Series, 46 (London, 1911).

[27]*The Tale of Beryn, with a Prologue of the Merry Adventure of the Pardoner with a Tapster at Canterbury,* ed. F. J. Furnivall and W. G. Stone, Chaucer Society, Second Series, 17, 24 (London, 1887).

calling on him the Host remarks, "Every man, save thou, hath toold his tale." The Parson refuses to entertain the company with vain fables, but offers "a myrie tale in prose," which is, however, a moral and religious discourse on penitence and the seven deadly sins. The whole company agrees that a sermon will be an appropriate close to the tale-telling and the Host bids him proceed. It has been suggested that the Manciple's Tale, which precedes, was really intended by Chaucer for the first of the return journey and the Parson's Tale for the last before the arrival at London.[28] But there is little in the text to support this view, and it has been urged that the solemnity of the Parson's Tale does not suggest that it was to be followed by a convivial supper at the Tabard. A more reasonable view is that Chaucer, finding that he would be unable to complete his original plan, reduced it to one tale for each pilgrim on the way to Canterbury. If illness was the cause of this decision, we can understand why he ended the work on a serious note and appended the famous Retraction, in which he expresses repentance for writing those tales that tend to sin as well as his other works of a worldly nature. However this may be, Chaucer has given his work a dignified and effective conclusion, in fine contrast to its light-hearted beginning. The Canterbury pilgrimage becomes symbolic

> Of thilke parfit glorious pilgrymage
> That highte Jerusalem celestial![29]

[28]See Manly and Rickert, *The Text of the Canterbury Tales,* II, 493; Tatlock, "The *Canterbury Tales* in 1400," 122-5.
[29]*Canterbury Tales,* X (I), 50-1.

THE MEANINGS OF THE WHITE WHALE*

R. E. Watters

TO produce a mighty book," wrote Herman Melville, "you must choose a mighty theme. No great and enduring volume can ever be written on the flea, though many there be who have tried it." (452)[1] Everybody will now grant that *Moby Dick* is a mighty book on a mighty theme—even though there is little agreement about the definition of that theme.

At the core of the problem is the interpretation of the white whale himself. Every reader capable of seeing more in the book than an exciting adventure story or a treatise on an extinct maritime industry soon becomes an enthusiastic fisherman, endeavouring "to hook the nose of this leviathan" (131). Not all such enthusiasts are sufficiently impressed by Ishmael's warning that the undertaking is a ponderous task: "To grope down into the bottom of the sea after them [the whales]; to have one's hands among the unspeakable foundations, ribs, and very pelvis of the world; this is a fearful thing. What am I that I should essay to hook the nose of this leviathan! The awful tauntings in Job might well appal me. 'Will he (the leviathan) make a covenant with thee? Behold the hope of him is vain!' But I have swam through libraries and sailed through oceans . . . I am in earnest; and I will try." (131) And much later Ishmael cries out that "in the mere act of penning my thoughts of this Leviathan, they weary me, and make me faint with their outreaching comprehensiveness of sweep, as if to include the whole circle of the sciences, and all the generations of whales, and men, and mastodons, past, present, and to come, with all the revolving panoramas of empire on earth, and throughout the whole universe, not excluding its suburbs. Such, and so magnifying, is the virtue of a large and liberal theme!" (452) If Melville himself, through Ishmael, could declare that his "whole book is a draught—nay, but the draught of a draught" (142), it at least behooves all commentators to avoid easy and superficial interpretations.

Nevertheless, the very disagreement of the critics may indicate something of value. Perhaps we might take a hint from Ahab and dive to "a little lower layer" for the universal principle which may

*In its original form this paper was read as a lecture at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, in April, 1949.

[1]Numbers following quotations indicate pages in the "Modern Library" edition of *Moby Dick*. Any quotations from other books will be indicated by standard footnotes.

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be putting "forth the mouldings of its features" (162) through the different white whales. Might it not have been Melville's own intention to invest his great symbolic leviathan with a plurality of meanings?

Simultaneously with his posing the problem, Melville created a formidable body of conflicting interpretations. The whalers on board the *Pequod* and the other whaling ships differed about the meaning of the white whale. At least, they differed when they were not hypnotized by Ahab's "evil magic," as Ishmael calls it, into accepting Ahab's interpretation that the whale was "in some dim, unsuspected way . . . the gliding great demon of the seas of life" (186). Many readers are similarly hypnotized into accepting one or more of Ahab's views, since Ahab had more than one.

In *Pierre,* the novel written immediately after *Moby Dick,* Melville writes: "Say what some poets will, Nature is not so much her own ever-sweet interpreter, as the mere supplier of that cunning alphabet, whereby selecting and combining as he pleases, each man reads his own peculiar lesson according to his own peculiar mind and mood."[2] In *Moby Dick* Melville may have followed Nature in supplying, in the white whale, a "cunning alphabet" for each of us to read his own lesson.

One doesn't have to read *Pierre* to obtain this clue to the riddle of Melville's greatest book. *Moby Dick* can stand without help. There is a clear hint in the very first chapter of *Moby Dick,* where Melville, discussing the fascination exercised on men by water, says: "Surely all this is not without meaning. And still deeper the meaning of that story of Narcissus, who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned. But that same image, we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life, and this is the key to it all." (3) The same idea is developed much more explicitly, however, in the wonderful chapter on the doubloon. The gold coin which is nailed to the mast to reward the man who first sights the white whale is, as the Negro Pip calls it, "the ship's navel." One morning, late in the cruise, all the leading characters of the book contemplate this navel, so to speak—and discover themselves. As Ahab recognized, "this round gold is but the image of the rounder globe, which, like a magician's glass, to each and every man in turn but mirrors back his own mysterious self" (428). Here is the Narcissus idea again. And after Ahab, Starbuck, Stubb, Flask, and the others have all read themselves in reading the coin, the little Negro, whose "insanity is heaven's sense" (413), thrice repeats his cryptic

[2]*Pierre, or The Ambiguities,* ed. Henry A. Murray (New York, 1949), 402.

comment: "I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look" (432). As William Ellery Sedgwick has pointed out in *Herman Melville: The Tragedy of Mind,* what Pip is saying, in effect, is that although the object (the coin) remains the same, and the process or verb ("look") remains the same, yet the one change in the subject of the verb makes the whole meaning different.

So the meaning of the coin—and the meaning of the white whale—depends on the subject, on the one who does the looking. There are therefore innumerable meanings for the white whale, just as there are innumerable readings of other examples of "Nature's cunning alphabet." This fact does not, of course, make every meaning equal in value to every other: that kind of philosophical relativism was foreign to Melville's thought. But all that needs saying here on this large topic is that, for Melville, the more omniscient the observer, the more true and valuable his interpretation.

II

Very early in the book Melville says that not all whalemen even "knew of [the white whale's] existence; only a few of them, comparatively, had knowingly seen him; while the number who as yet had actually and knowingly given battle to him, was small indeed" (177). Most whalemen—the common people—had at best heard rumours and shared some general beliefs about this unseen and unknown whale: that he was immense, ferocious, malignant, and not without apparent intelligence. Such ordinary men, like their fellows aboard the *Pequod,* looked upon the white whale as dangerous and intelligent, and therefore perhaps "evil" in the sense of harmful—just as they would no doubt regard a vicious dog as a malignant creature. But such an attitude did not make them take up any quarrel with the creator or with the universe. They thought of the white whale as a particular danger, not as the deity or an agent of the deity, not as the devil or an agent of the devil, and not as a symbol of the inherent evil or unintelligibility of the universe. A few of the "superstitiously inclined," as Ishmael calls them, go a little further and conceive of the white whale as immortal and ubiquitous—but even that advance leaves them far removed from the interpretations of either Ahab or Ishmael.

These ordinary men were, in their interpretations, far closer to Starbuck, whose orthodox piety was shocked at Ahab's seeking "vengeance on a dumb brute . . . that simply smote thee from blindest instinct!" (162) Before this voyage, Starbuck had only "heard" of

the white whale, and to him that whale always remained a "dumb brute," a natural even if concentrated manifestation of normal life in the universe of whaling, part of the danger and death one risked in "the business we follow" (162). Such perils, which had been fatal to both his father and his brother, were no doubt "evil" in one sense, but at worst were only the tragic accompaniments to a hazardous profession. He killed whales for a living, not for adventure, let alone any "heaven-insulting purpose" (167). He is a "staid, steadfast man" (112) who is best pleased when "duty and profit" go "hand in hand" (219). His attitude towards the white whale is simply that the risk is too great for the profit that might accrue. He is unconcerned with any possible glory, for he is no "crusader after perils" (113). He is piously and sincerely content to trust in God to run the universe while he does his duty to the owners and hunts whales for his living. He dies performing his duty and praying to his God.

To Stubb, the casual, happy-go-lucky second mate, whaling is simply glorious fun. "Think not" is his "eleventh commandment" (125) and "a laugh's the wisest, easiest answer to all that's queer" (168). Like Starbuck, he leaves the running of the universe to other hands; but whereas Starbuck trusts in a personal God, Stubb is a fatalist: he finds "unfailing comfort" in his belief that "it's all predestinated" (168). Ahab has a similar fatalism—but, gifted with high intellectual powers, Ahab finds no comfort in it. Stubb willingly follows his captain who, he says, acts on the right principle: "live in the game, and die in it!" (494) Nevertheless, Ahab has little respect for jolly Stubb, whereas he has some for Starbuck who is capable of understanding Ahab's purposes and motives, while disapproving them. "Down, dog, and kennel!" (124) Ahab once snarls at Stubb; and later, when Stubb laughs at the wreck of Ahab's boat and calls it "the thistle the ass refused," Ahab calls him "a soulless thing. . . . Did I not know thee brave as fearless fire (and as mechanical) I could swear thou wert a poltroon." (544) By whale-oil light Stubb eats whale-steak as a delight to his palate, just as he hunts whales for the thrill, the joyous adventure. He impiously prays to the corpusants, damns the devil out of bravado, and blasphemously scoffs at God (326). In short, he is almost completely devoid of a sense of values,[3] completely indifferent to spiritual and intellectual affairs.

[3]It is true, nevertheless, that the first time Pip jumped from the whaleboat Stubb cut loose from a whale to save him, and apparently his abandoning Pip the second time is not to be held too much against him. It was Stubb, also, who was the only one aboard the *Pequod* who voiced the desire to help the captain of the *Rachel* search for his lost son. Whether he displays impulse or principle in such acts is difficult to decide.

Life to him is a jolly game, a high-spirited frolic. His attitude towards the white whale is clearly that it is to be merely the crowning adventure, a daring challenge—nothing more. Even death becomes but an occasion for witticisms.

In Starbuck and Stubb, therefore, we have representatives of two large groups of readers: those who prefer to regard the white whale as merely a dangerous specimen of sea life, without philosophical or symbolic connotations; and those who give no thought to the matter at all provided the adventure be exciting. As Ahab says, "Starbuck is Stubb reversed, and Stubb is Starbuck; and ye two are all mankind" (544).

In Flask we have a slightly different point of view or interpretation. He is described as pugnacious, destructive, indifferent or cruel (he stamps carelessly on Daggoo's shoulders while perching there for better lookout, and he probes the ulcerous growth on the sick whale). He is the complete materialist, "so utterly lost . . . to all sense of reverence for the many marvels . . . and mystic ways [of whales] . . . that in his poor opinion, the wondrous whale was but a species of magnified mouse, or at least water-rat, requiring only a little circumvention and some small application of time and trouble in order to kill and boil. . . . he followed these fish for the fun of it." (116) If Starbuck is the "careful man in the whale fishery," and Stubb the adventurer, then Flask is the ignorant and destructive mediocrity. All he sees in the gold doubloon is a certain number of cigars, and the white whale himself presumably is only worth so many more. In the face of death from Moby Dick his last thought is of money.

Apart from Ahab, the three harpooneers are the only persons aboard the *Pequod* who have previously encountered or seen the white whale. These three—the American Indian, the South Sea Islander, and the African Negro—have all experienced Moby Dick before, but their interpretations of him are as much a mystery as Queequeg's thoughts about the tattooing on his body. Perhaps uncomprehendingly, but certainly uncomplainingly, they do what they have to do skilfully and courageously. They are almost the only crewmen Ahab trusts to serve him faithfully in his pursuit of the whale (528), yet they do not seem to see in the white whale any of Ahab's meanings or any of the three mates'. Like Starbuck, they do their duty, but unlike him they feel no responsibility to the owners or to commercial interests. Unlike Ahab, they feel no hatred as they chase the white whale, and unlike the "civilized part of the crew" they remain unmoved by such mysterious events as the "plaintively wild and unearthly" cry in the night (514) which others variously

interpret as the cries of mermaids, the "voices of newly drowned men," a foreshadowing of future evils, and the wailing of seals. They remain "almost wholly unimpressed" by Ahab's creation of his own compass (509), and by his defiance of the corpusants. As the *Pequod* sinks, the three harpooneers remain at the mast-heads, "fixed by infatuation, or fidelity, or fate, to their once lofty perches," still maintaining "their sinking lookouts on the sea" (565). Tashtego during the thunder and lightning on the night of the corpusants, while lashing the main top-sail yard, had cried: "Stop that thunder! Plenty too much thunder up here. . . . We don't want thunder; we want rum. . . . Um, um, um!" (504) He is again at the main mast-head when he dies, while dutifully nailing Ahab's flag to the mast, and taking down in his death-grasp "the bird of heaven" or sky-hawk (565).

Fedallah's point of view or interpretation is also enigmatic. He has, of course, a mysterious affinity, sometimes a kind of identity, with Ahab, though they rarely speak to each other, and though Ahab "shunned Fedallah" (528) when he was choosing a man to hoist him aloft to a look-out point. Fedallah compares the wrinkles on the right whale's head to the lines in his hand (327), in a not dissimilar gesture to Queequeg's comparing his tattooing to the signs on the doubloon. Fedallah merely "makes a sign" to the doubloon and "bows himself" in a way which makes Stubb label him a "fire worshipper" (431). On the night of the corpusants, Fedallah kneels "beneath the doubloon and the flame" and is used as a footstool by Ahab in his harangue to the "clear spirit of clear fire" (499). Fedallah is a fatalist, who foresees his own doom and that of Ahab, yet chooses to let Ahab misinterpret his prophetic messages (491-2). To Fedallah, the white whale means death and a horrible "hearse"—an instrument of a foreseen fate, just as Fedallah himself is an instrument of Ahab's all-consuming purpose. But the problem of which is the agent and which the principal here (as elsewhere) becomes involved, for to make Fedallah's fate come to pass Ahab and his quest are as "instrumental" as Moby Dick himself. For Fedallah, the meanings of the white whale and of Ahab coincide.

Ahab's complex conception of the white whale has received by far the most attention. It is not therefore necessary to discuss it here at any length. To Ahab, Moby Dick was a composite entity—physical power, wilful intelligence, and malignant divinity—a trinity of body, mind, and spirit in opposition to Ahab. Which of the three a reader chooses to emphasize as *the* meaning for Ahab is, as Melville clearly implies, a reflection of the reader's own personal character.

From his first encounter with Moby Dick, Ahab has hated him, and "at last came to identify with him, not only all his bodily woes, but all his intellectual and spiritual exasperations. . . . All that most maddens and torments; all that stirs up the lees of things; all truth with malice in it; all that cracks the sinews and cakes the brain; all the subtle demonisms of life and thought; all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby Dick. He piled upon the whale's white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam down. . . ." (183) Ahab is not sure whether the white whale is "agent" or "principal"; it is enough for him that the whale should be assailable. The whale may be only a "pasteboard mask," like "all visible objects," but in him Ahab sees "outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it," and he hates that "inscrutable thing" (162). As he says on the third day of the chase, "all the things that most exasperate and outrage mortal man, all these things are bodiless, but only bodiless as objects, not as agents. There's a most special, a most cunning, oh, a most malicious difference!" (555) Ahab's "great natural intellect" had itself become an agent, the "living instrument" of his monomania (184), which made him intent, not on profitable cruises or dutiful responsibility to his crew, not even on glory and adventure, but "on an audacious, immitigable, and supernatural revenge" (186), impious defiance, and despotic self-gratification.

III

Whereas Ahab's interpretations of the white whale have received much attention, Ishmael's have been almost equally neglected. But before Ahab reveals his problem and his purpose of hunting the white whale, Ishmael has already told us that "the problem of the universe" was revolving in him (156). When Ahab binds the crew with an oath to hunt Moby Dick to his death, the occasion produced in Ishmael "a wild, mystical, sympathetical feeling"; as he says, "Ahab's quenchless feud seemed mine" (176). He gave himself "up to the abandonment of the time and the place; but while yet all a-rush to encounter the whale, could see naught in that brute but the deadliest ill" (186).

Ishmael, however, is a thoughtful man—a Melville. And the problem of the universe and/or the whale went on revolving in him. He devotes an entire chapter to the attempt to say "what the white whale . . . at times . . . was to me." He begins with these words: "Aside from those more obvious considerations touching Moby Dick, which could not but occasionally awaken in any man's soul

some alarm, there was another thought, or rather vague, nameless horror concerning him, which at times by its intensity completely overpowered all the rest; and yet so mystical and well nigh ineffable was it, that I almost despair of putting it in a comprehensible form. It was the whiteness of the whale that above all things appalled me. But how can I hope to explain myself here; and yet, in some dim, random way, *explain myself I must, else all these chapters might be naught.*" (187, my italics) The rest of this famous chapter on the whiteness of the whale discusses *this* meaning—and it is surely significant that *no one else, not even Ahab,* appears to be troubled by this aspect of Moby Dick.[4] Only to Ishmael has the whiteness any meaning at all.

Ishmael recognizes that there are innumerable "sweet, and honourable, and sublime" associations with whiteness (188), that, indeed, "whiteness . . . is at once the most meaning symbol of spiritual things, nay, the very veil of the Christian's Deity; and yet . . . it is the intensifying agent in things the most appalling to mankind" (194). The root of the horror inspired in him by whiteness,[5] Ishmael concludes, seems to be that whiteness symbolizes the "indefiniteness," the "heartless voids and immensities," the "dumb blankness" of the universe (194-5). Later, on reading about the "most wondrous phenomenon which the secret seas have hitherto revealed to mankind," the great squid, which appeared as a silent "great white mass . . . like a snow slide . . . no perceptible face or front . . . no conceivable token of either sensation or instinct; but . . . an unearthly, formless, chance-like apparition of life" (277), we are reminded of these phrases in Ishmael's conclusion. But in the chapter on "The Whiteness of the Whale" Ishmael goes on to interpret the whiteness as a symbol that the universe is a formless, indefinite blank, and that beauty and meaning are "but subtile deceits, not actually inherent in substances, but only laid on from without" by the observer (195).

[4]Pip is possibly the exception. At the end of the midnight scene on the forecastle during which the crewmen reveal the effects on them of the oath and the rum, Pip cries: "Lord help such jollies. . . . White squalls? white whale, shirr! shirr! Here have I heard all their chat just now, and the white whale—shirr! shirr!—but spoken of once! . . . Oh, thou big white God . . . have mercy on this small black boy. . . ." (176)

[5]Whiteness is associated with most of the portentous events of the book. Not only is the white squid regarded as an unfavourable omen, but the white "spirit spout," first described by Fedallah in the Atlantic and frequently perceived thereafter on moonlit nights, is associated with the white whale, though never explained. The flame of the corpusants, defiantly addressed by Ahab, was white. Among other occurrences which might be mentioned the two most obvious are Ahab's white whalebone leg and, more significantly, the "lividly whitish" scar or brand which possibly streaked his body from crown to sole and for which numerous interpretations and explanations were offered by various members of the crew.

Here we quite obviously have again the idea of "I look, you look, he looks. . . ." The universe, this "rounder globe" is like the doubloon, and both are like the white whale—a blank existence upon which form or meaning is projected by the observer. Ishmael goes farther, to consider that light itself "remains white or colourless in itself" and requires a "medium" (presumably the "eyes" of some observer) if any colour is to be seen by the light (195). Even Ahab himself, when his "tormented spirit" was for a time dissociated from his monomaniac purpose, becomes a meaningless being. Melville employs the same metaphor of light to express this point, in the chapter entitled "The Chart," which explains how sometimes there would be a spontaneous rebellion of Ahab's "living principle or soul" against "the characterizing mind, which at other times employed it for its outer vehicle or agent. . . . Therefore, the tormented spirit that glared out of bodily eyes, when *what seemed Ahab* rushed from his room, was for a time but a vacated thing, a formless somnambulistic being, a ray of living light, to be sure, but without an object to colour, and therefore a blankness in itself." (201, my italics)

The meaning Ishmael finds in the white whale is obviously very different from any of Ahab's—and the difference is perhaps most briefly suggested by saying that to Ahab the white whale was a personification, a "pasteboard mask," or perhaps an effigy, of something otherwise unknown and unassailable; whereas to Ishmael the whale is merely a symbol. If afflicted with a monomania such as Ahab's, one can feel like assaulting and destroying a personification or effigy; but the only thing to do with a symbol is to understand it. Ishmael, therefore, saw the white whale as a symbol of what might be called a metaphysical hypothesis, and throughout the rest of the book he shows himself endeavouring to study the evidence for and against that hypothesis. He seeks not to destroy the whale for vengeance, profit, or pleasure, but simply to understand it, to comprehend it, to reduce the unknown to intelligibility. And this, he insists, is not a project to be pursued in a quiet study, ruminating over the partial and unreliable reports of other men (as provided in fragmentary books or faulty paintings of whales). As he puts it: "Only in the heart of quickest perils; only when within the eddyings of his angry flukes; only on the profound unbounded sea, can the fully invested whale be truly and livingly found out" (451).

The fact has been strangely overlooked that Ishmael, as well as Ahab, deliberately embarked in quest of the white whale. The others aboard the *Pequod* were pursuing other ends when they were irresistibly drawn into Ahab's wake. But Ishmael tells us in the first

chapter that "chief among these motives" which induced him into going a-whaling "was the overwhelming idea of the great whale himself. Such a portentous and mysterious monster roused all my curiosity. . . . the great flood-gates of the wonder-world swung open, and in the wild conceits that swayed me to my purpose, two and two there floated into my inmost soul, endless processions of the whale, and, mid most of them all, one grand hooded phantom, like a snow hill in the air." (6)

This curiosity, or passion to comprehend, explains why it is Ishmael (not Ahab, Starbuck, or anyone else) who is shown as being interested in every detail about whales, both species and individuals—the whales that appear in books, pictures, and doorknockers; that contribute food, oil, and corset stays; that are detected in mountain ridges and stars; that have been fossilized, worshipped, hunted, and scientifically studied; that have been dissected, analysed, and described to exhibit every possible characteristic. Understandably enough, he often feels that complete comprehension is impossible—"there is no earthly way of finding out precisely what the whale really looks like" (267); "the mystic-marked whale remains undecipherable" (306) and "dissect him how I may . . . I know him not, and never will" (377). Nevertheless, he must continue to make the attempt "to approve myself omnisciently exhaustive in the enterprise" (451), to pursue his "thoughts of this Leviathan" wherever they lead, through "the whole circle of the sciences, and all the generations of whales, and men, and mastodons, past, present, and to come, with all the revolving panoramas of empire on earth, and throughout the whole universe" (452).

This necessity to learn and include everything in order to comprehend the essential principle is the true artistic justification of Ishmael's compiling the mass of whaling details given in *Moby Dick*. He is attempting to see the whale not partially, as a personified malignancy, a natural peril, a challenge, or a monetary value, but omnisciently, as a possibly intelligible microcosm in a possibly intelligible cosmos. The meaning of the white whale, for Ishmael, seems to be the totality of all meanings—in a word, omniscience.

Although Ishmael's details and measurements tell us much about the species to which the white whale belongs, knowledge of Moby Dick himself is provided before the final encounter by the several ships hailed by the *Pequod*. What information might have been given by the long-seasoned veteran whalers aboard the spectral and forlorn *Goney* was lost when her captain dropped his speaking trumpet

in the very act of answering. Two of the others—the *Jungfrau* and the *Rosebud*—had never even heard of the white whale. The rolling *Bachelor* has heard of him but in its rollicking prosperity chooses not to believe in him. The *Town-Ho* regarded the white whale as an instrument of God's judgment and justice, and the *Jeroboam* went so far as to consider him "the Shaker God incarnated" (315). The *Samuel Enderby* had once encountered him, and her captain now wore a white whalebone arm as the price of his present wisdom; though he has seen him twice since, and recognizes that there would be both profit and glory in killing him, "he's best let alone" (439). The *Rachel* has lost a whole boat's crew, including the captain's twelve-year-old son. The *Delight* is burying the only body recovered of "five stout men" lost the previous day. For each ship Moby Dick has acquired a different meaning.

It is worth remembering that none of these ships sought the white whale; they came upon him (those that did) only by chance while they were hunting other whales, and each time (as in Ahab's own first encounter) Moby Dick was acting as the protector of those hunted whales. Only the *Pequod* deliberately sought out the white whale himself, and whereas on the other encounters he was shepherding other whales, he was a solitary when the *Pequod* came upon him. Moreover, only Ahab is able to "raise" the white whale on each of the three days of the chase. As he boasts: "*I* only; none of ye could have raised the White Whale first" (537). He is quite right: it is Ahab's whale they have been persuaded into chasing, and it is Ahab's whale they have found.

Indeed, it is not until the third day of the chase that the qualities perceived by Ahab in the whale become really apparent to the others aboard the *Pequod*. Ishmael gives us a careful description of Moby Dick when he is first overtaken:

> A gentle joyousness—a mighty mildness of repose in swiftness, invested the gliding whale. Not the white bull Jupiter swimming away with ravished Europa . . . not Jove, not that great majesty Supreme! did surpass the glorified White Whale as he so divinely swam. . . .
> . . . No wonder there had been some among the hunters who namelessly transported and allured by all this serenity, had ventured to assail it; but had fatally found that quietude but the vesture of tornadoes. Yet calm, enticing calm, oh, whale! thou glidest on, to all who for the first time eye thee. . . .
>
> And thus, through the serene tranquilities of the tropical sea, among waves whose hand-clappings were suspended by exceeding rapture, Moby Dick moved on, still withholding from sight the full terrors of his

submerged trunk, entirely hiding the wrenched hideousness of his jaw. But soon the fore part of him slowly rose from the water; for an instant . . . and warningly waving his bannered flukes in the air, the grand god revealed himself. . . . (538-9)

That first day the white whale treated all his pursuers as gently, if as warningly, as a patient mother might her wilfully erring children. And the second day he took away simultaneously both Ahab's "evil shadow," Fedallah, and Ahab's ivory leg—not even his remaining human one. No wonder Starbuck believed that "all good angels" were mobbing Ahab with warnings. "Oh, oh,—Impiety and blasphemy to hunt him more!" (552)

The third day ended the drama—except for the epilogue about Ishmael. Now it is certain that Ishmael is saved not for the technical reason that a narrator must be left alive to tell the story—for when throughout the book has Melville ever allowed himself to be cramped by the exigencies of technique? No. Ishmael was saved because he alone had learned anything from all their experiences, because he had, in effect, solved *his* problem, had triumphed over the symbolic white whale and the universe. He had, I think, proved his hypothesis—to his own satisfaction at least—and the *very means of his salvation* symbolizes the truth, for him, of *his* meaning of the white whale.

That marvellous concluding paragraph of the book contains words which can almost be taken as a summary description of Ishmael's role throughout the entire story:

> So, floating on the margin of the ensuing scene, and in full sight of it, when the half-spent suction of the sunk ship reached me, I was then, but slowly, drawn towards the closing vortex. When I reached it, it had subsided to a creamy pool. Round and round, then, and ever contracting towards the button-like black bubble at the axis of that slowly wheeling circle, like another Ixion I did revolve. Till, gaining that vital centre, the black bubble upward burst; and now, liberated by reason of its cunning spring, and, owing to its great buoyancy, rising with great force, the coffin lifebuoy shot lengthwise from the sea, fell over, and floated by my side. Buoyed up by that coffin, for almost one whole day and night, I floated on a soft and dirge-like main. The unharming sharks, they glided by as if with padlocks on their mouths; the savage sea-hawks sailed with sheathed beaks. On the second day, a sail drew near, nearer, and picked me up at last. It was the devious-cruising Rachel, that in her retracing search after her missing children, only found another orphan.

IV

But let us look again at that coffin, which was, after all, *not* a coffin. This long wooden box, like everything else in the universe, shifts its meanings according to the point of view of the beholder.

First, consider its creator. Like his handiwork, the carpenter and coffin-maker is more things than one. Ahab addresses him once as "manmaker" (466) and later calls him "as unprincipled as the gods, and as much of a jack-of-all-trades" (518). He is not only carpenter and coffin-maker but painter, apothecary, surgeon, dentist, and leg-maker to Ahab. His attitude towards the society and universe in which he lives is one of negatives: indifference, "uncompromisedness," and unintelligence. As a creator, "he did not seem to work so much by reason or by instinct" or by training, "but merely by a kind of deaf and dumb, spontaneous literal process. He was a pure manipulater. . . ." (464) His most remarkable characteristic was "a certain impersonal stolidity as it were . . . it seemed one with the general stolidity discernible in the whole visible world; which while pauselessly active in uncounted modes, still eternally holds its peace, and ignores you, though you dig foundations for cathedrals. . . . He was a stript abstract; an unfractioned integral; uncompromised as a newborn babe; living without premeditated reference to this world or the next. . . . He was like one of those unreasoning but still highly useful . . . contrivances [such as a pocket-knife with an assortment of tools attached]. . . . So, if his superiors wanted to use the carpenter for a screw-driver, all they had to do was to open that part of him . . . or if for tweezers, take him up by the legs, and there they were." (463-4) Thus the carpenter, like the doubloon and the white whale, had a multiplicity of uses and meanings.

Queequeg in his sickness had asked for a "canoe" like those "all whalemen who died in Nantucket were laid in" (473). And he had admired this Nantucket custom because it was agreeable to his own race's making canoes in which to send forth their dead warriors. But to the eyes of the carpenter and the crew the object requested was a coffin, not a canoe. And out of "some heathenish, coffin-coloured old lumber aboard, which, upon a long previous voyage, had been cut from the aboriginal groves of the Lackaday islands" (474) the carpenter made the coffin to fit one individual man by exact measurement.

But when Queequeg recalled some undone duties ashore he changed his mind about dying and changed the canoe-coffin into a sea-chest. Not only that. He spent many hours carving the lid, copying the tattooing on his body, with which he had earlier found resemblances upon the gold doubloon. "This tattooing," we are told, "had been the work of a departed prophet . . . who by those hieroglyphic marks had written out . . . a complete theory of the heavens and the earth, and a mystical treatise on the art of attaining truth" (477).

It was this composite creation which saved Ishmael—for when the *Pequod*'s original lifebuoy sank with the man it had been dropped to save, Queequeg was the one who suggested that the canoe-coffin-seachest-theory-of-the-universe-and-treatise-on-the-art-of-attaining-truth should be transformed into a lifebuoy. No means of salvation could be more fitting for Ishmael, the man whose constant art and endeavour had been to discover a truth by which he might live.[6]

What might be termed the coffin theme pervades the book from beginning to end. In the opening paragraph Ishmael tells us that he recognizes the time for him to get to sea by certain symptoms: "whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul . . . whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin-warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet" (1). He first hears of Queequeg when a certain innkeeper named Peter Coffin assigns him the same bed. Tashtego almost found himself "coffined, hearsed, and tombed" (343) in the sinking whale's head until "delivered" by Queequeg's obstetrics." To Fedallah, Moby Dick was the first hearse, the *Pequod* itself the second hearse in that it carried the coffin lifebuoy. And the *Pequod,* moreover, is not only hearse but general coffin and tomb for the little world of men aboard. Ahab, who more than once dreamed of hearses, had been forewarned by Fedallah: "neither hearse nor coffin can be thine" (491). Ishmael survives by means of a "canoe" chosen by Queequeg; but Queequeg succumbs aboard a "hearse" selected at the Nantucket wharf by Ishmael. Meanings fluctuate and change here too.

So, in its own way, the coffin-lifebuoy-treatise becomes one with the doubloon and the ship and the white whale—and they all symbolize the universe, incorporating Nature's "cunning alphabet whereby selecting and combining as he pleases, each man reads his own peculiar lesson according to his own peculiar mind and mood." Herman Melville's *Moby Dick,* like Nature, has its alphabet, and we are each left to read it for ourselves with whatever "outreaching comprehensiveness of sweep" we are able to encompass.

[6]When the sociable little Pip, who lacked Ishmael's boldness and hard-won comprehension, was abandoned in the sea for a few hours, he went insane because of "the awful lonesomeness . . . the intense concentration of self in the middle of such a heartless immensity" (412). "The sea had jeeringly kept his [Pip's] finite body up, but drowned the infinite of his soul" (413). Pip had had no lifebuoy of any kind to sustain him.

JOSEPH FURPHY, AUSTRALIAN

BRUCE SUTHERLAND

IN the year that Furphy's first book, *Such is Life,* was published Havelock Ellis wrote a short essay on Australian fiction. Furphy is not mentioned, for Ellis had never heard of him, but the tone of the essay is prophetic. "It is always interesting," wrote Ellis, "to study the literature of a young race, the offshoot of an old race living under the influences of an absolutely new environment. The interest of such work is often out of all relation to its absolute literary quality, because . . . we see the outcome of a new combination of influences and ideals, a combination which has never exactly come about before. . . . In a land like Australia where a predominantly northern and British race, brought into closer contact with the sunshine, has become accustomed to find the extremes of luxury and hardship almost side by side . . . a young nation runs the risk of becoming rotten before it is ripe. That is a risk which the Australians may happily escape . . . and the beginnings of their national literature will one day, we may be sure, be a subject of reverent study."[1]

In a restricted sense Furphy comes close to being a "subject of reverent study" in his native Australia. He has emerged as one of the original forces in Australian letters because he himself was original. He had much to say that was worth saying and a way of saying it that is natural and unrestrained. There is enough of "a new combination of influences and ideals" in his work to warrant his own description of it: "temper, democratic; bias, offensively Australian." Furphy's contemporaries largely ignored his work; there are many present-day Australians who either dislike his books or have never read them; there has been much over-praise and misinterpretation, but the fact remains that so far as indigenous Australian literature is concerned Furphy stands out in bold relief.

The Australian environment worked its wonders on this representative of a northern race and one of Furphy's firmest convictions was that environment exerts a far more powerful influence upon the growth of human character than does heredity. He deliberately chose not to be separated from his own environment; consequently his writings come close to being an epitome of the ideals and characteristics of a way of life which was a part of the Australia that he knew so well. His heritage, too, was important in the formation of his ideals, and that is where the story of Joseph Furphy begins.

[1] *Weekly Critical Review,* Sept. 17, 1903.

In 1841 a young Irish couple, erstwhile tenants on the estate of the Duke of Manchester in County Armagh, arrived at Port Phillip, Victoria, as bounty immigrants. They were immediately employed on a sheep station a few miles from Melbourne where the only free man among convict workers was Samuel Furphy, and the only white woman, his wife Judith. Samuel Furphy was an extremely capable man: a gardener whose botanical knowledge was of value to visiting scientists; an amateur ethnologist who studied aboriginal lore; a clever man who could do almost anything needful with his hands; a pious, hard-working, unworldly Methodist who lacked the ingredients for what the world generally regards as success.

After about a year the Furphys moved to another station at Yarra Glen, also near Melbourne, and here Joseph Furphy was born on September 26, 1843. His early training came entirely from his parents and from them he learned to respect books and book learning and the fundamentals of Christian living. Among the available books were Shakespeare and the Bible, and, like Hardy, Furphy soon came to know them both so well that by the age of seven he could recite long passages at random from either work. Unlike his English contemporary, however, there were long years of manual labour ahead for Furphy, but the joy of books and the zest for knowledge remained a life-long passion.

Furphy's reading habits followed no pattern. For long periods he had to take what was available, and the "book swapping" system's chief characteristic was variety rather than selection. His main interests were literary and his own writings are filled with allusions ranging from Dante to Whitman. The Mechanics Institutes gave him access to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and much of his "erudition" stemmed from that source. Furphy was also well acquainted with the social philosophers whose works were to influence the early Australian socialist movement. His intellectual curiosity was insatiable and for good or ill he had to depend upon his own critical judgment which was at times profound, at times naïve, but always original.

The Furphy family made a number of removes during their early years in Australia, from Yearing (Yarra Glen) to Kangaroo Ground to Kyneton, and followed a number of occupations including gardening, shoemaking, storekeeping, farming, and threshing. Young Furphy received a common school education, worked on the family farm, and helped to run the family threshing plant so that at an early age he became a competent farm mechanic. "Under paternal pressure," he wrote, "my teens were spent in dodging out of farm work, and in learning to mismanage various kinds of portable engine plant." In off

seasons he worked as an engine-driver, first at a mine and later at a saw-mill, and one extended period was devoted to arduous and unprofitable work on worn-out gold fields at Castlemain and Bendigo. It is unfortunate that so little from this early period has appeared in his writings.

By the time he was twenty-two, in 1865, Furphy had acquired a threshing plant of his own. At harvest time he moved from farm to farm in various parts of northern Victoria. The next year he met and married Leonie Germaine, a French girl, whose dowry consisted of a small farm at Glenlyon. For two years after his marriage Furphy managed this farm while continuing with his own threshing business. In 1868 the whole Furphy clan moved to selections in the Lake Cooper section of the Goulburn valley on a station that had been thrown open to closer settlement. After "four or five years' occupation on the worst selection in Rodney," Joseph Furphy abandoned farming. He now had a growing family with the accompanying responsibilities, but work proved hard to come by. He tried road building near the village of Corop and worked as a farm mechanic for wages. Finally he was forced into that colourful occupation which has furnished the background for so much of his written work, bullock driving in the Riverina region of New South Wales.

The Riverina, sweeping northward from the Murray River, across the Old Man Plain, the Murrumbidgee, the Lachlan, the Willandra Billabong, and on to the Darling River has no exact equivalent in North America. "For out here," as C. E. W. Bean remarks in *On the Wool Track*, "you have reached the core of Australia, the real red Australia of the ages, which—though the rivers have worn their channels through it, and spewed out their black silt in narrow ribbons across it—still hems in this flat modern river soil, so that . . . only a few miles from the river-bank, you will always come out in the end upon a red land, a slightly higher land, rising sharply from the grey plain; a land which stretches away and away across the heart of Australia."

This region, dotted with sheep and cattle stations thousands of acres in extent was, and still is, the centre of the Australian wool industry. Not so long ago those station communities without ready access to river transport depended upon bullock teams travelling to and from the railhead to get the wool-clip out and needed supplies in. Some stations had their own teams but many depended upon the independent "bullocky" for this arduous service. The bullocky has become a creature of legend in Australia, but in Furphy's day he was a very real character. A free agent, owning his own "plant" of

one or two wagons of eight to twelve tons and twenty to thirty bullocks, he hauled miscellaneous merchandise ranging from baling wire to dynamite over tremendous distances, through country that was often trackless, waterless, and without grass. The work was leisurely, and, by virtue of his personal independence and long periods of forced and patient idleness, the bullock driver had ample time to think. The highest tribute ever paid to this characteristically Australian breed of men can be summed up in Bean's words: ". . . of all the philosophers in Australia, universities included, there was probably not one that gave so much of his time to original thought as the bullocky." In his writings it became Furphy's privilege and responsibility to present a picture of life as seen through the eyes of these men who in many ways were the quintessence of Australianism.

Furphy removed his family to the railhead town of Hay in New South Wales and began his career as a bullock driver with a wagon and four bullocks. Later he acquired "two of the best bullock teams that ever traded from Hay." Most of the time his family remained in town, but there were periods of camping out when members of the family accompanied him on his travels. For seven or eight years, he explained, "I followed this adventurous and profane occupation, partly on the Victorian border, but chiefly in Northern Riverina, where I saw all that was to be seen. Old Man drought supervened, impelling me to sell relics of carrying plant and return to Victoria, for the sake of the children." The drought of 1883 and an epidemic of pleuro-pneumonia among the bullocks had concluded another Furphy venture with no material gain to himself. A failure, he resignedly accepted a post at the Shepparton Implements Works owned by his brother John.

Joseph Furphy was past forty when he settled in Shepparton, but now, for the first time in his life, he had regular working hours and some degree of permanency. He made friends easily. He discovered the Sydney *Bulletin* which was outspoken in its Australianism. He began to consolidate the political and social philosophy which for many years had been growing in his mind. From his youth he had been a ready versifier: "As is often the case with me, the thought shaped itself into verse"; his reading during the wandering years had been prodigious, but never until now had he had the opportunity to turn his mind seriously to thoughts of a writing career. Ophthalmia, heritage from his Riverina days, plagued him but did not seriously impair his eyesight. The time for writing was propitious.

During the daytime he worked as a draughtsman and machinery expert. At night he wrote, first in a front room in the family cottage

but later in a hut, built by himself to the rear of his property, on the edge of a chasm backing on the Goulburn River. This tiny structure, filled by a bed, a chair, and a table became his refuge. Warmed by a fireplace and lighted by a kerosene lamp covered with an old felt hat, the cabin served as both a study and an informal salon, for Furphy never could resist the temptation to philosophize and yarn with all comers.

In 1889 his first story, "The Mythical Sundowner," was published in the *Bulletin* under the pen name of Warrigal Jack. Thus encouraged, Furphy settled down to the writing of a full-length book which he completed in 1897 and submitted to the *Bulletin* with this cryptic message: "I have just finished writing a full-sized novel, title, *Such is Life,* scene, Riverina and Northern Vic.; temper, democratic; bias, offensively Australian. Now what publishing firm shall I communicate with . . . ?" This was the beginning of a long, hard road to publication which makes a story in itself. After periods of waiting and uncertainty the work finally appeared in 1903 under *Bulletin* auspices, but with large sections of the original manuscript excised. There was no demand for it, or its successors, during Furphy's lifetime but its worth was recognized by a few Australians and their loyalty kept it alive. In 1937 an abridged English edition appeared, and by 1944 interest had reached the point where a new and complete Australian edition was called for. In 1948 the book reached the United States by way of the University of Chicago Press. Even now it is not widely read, but recognition, belated as it is, assures for this book a high place in the history of Australian letters.

One of the parts shorn from *Such is Life* became *Rigby's Romance,* published in serial form in the Socialist paper *Barrier Truth* of Broken Hill in 1905-6. In 1921 this work appeared as a book, in an abridged edition, and was first published in full in 1946. Another excised portion, a manuscript of some 40,000 words known as *The Buln-Buln and the Brolga,* did not appear in print until 1948. Other Furphy stories have been published, many have not, and some have never been located either in print or in manuscript. It is safe to assume, however, that the three published prose works represent his literary power at its highest and contain the essence of his personal philosophy.

Furphy chose to write under a pen name for reasons of his own and the pseudonym, Tom Collins, like its American counterpart, Mark Twain, came to be better known than the author's real name. Since "Tom Collins" to Australians was synonymous with "idle rumour" its adoption as the name for the narrator of the stories was intended humorously. The character Tom Collins, like the other

Geoffrey in Chaucer, is partly a caricature of his creator, partly a crossroads philosopher; a catalytic agent who starts the "billy" boiling, a humorous, kindly man, a class-conscious Rabelaisian who sees and records the thoughts and actions of others and who has a deep affection for "men who ought to be avoided." In some ways he is very similar to Furphy himself.

Such is Life is an original work of art that did not come alive until nearly fifty years after its writing. Eight or nine years of precious leisure had gone into its composition, followed by six years of waiting for its publication, yet considerably less than the 2,000 printed copies were sold and the venture had cost Furphy much in money as well as in time. Reasons for the neglect of *Such is Life* are as varied as the human personality. Like many another book that was written for the delight and edification of the generality of readers, this one contains too much material too laboriously presented and demands too much of the reader ever to be popular. The narrative moves at a painfully leisurely pace and is constantly interrupted by moments of frivolity and whimsy, by learned and erudite discourses on matters encyclopaedic, and by sermons on man. The diction is as varied as the context. Heavy, pedantic, verbose prose generally indicates that a sermon is in the making. Delightful but time-consuming dialects, English, Irish, Scotch, Chinese, German, and native Australian, although phonetically accurate, are an obstacle for the uninitiated. Over-subtlety and formlessness confound the confusion. Yet the fact remains that this "wandering, sprawling, richly earthy tale" has about it elements of greatness that mark it as one of the significant books of the century.

Furphy's purpose was simple enough. He wanted to "afford to the observant reader a fair picture of Life," as he had seen it during his bullocky days in the Riverina. Man, against this backdrop, plays his tragi-comic part in the drama of life and his reactions are recorded with consummate skill and rich humour by a participant turned observer. Each character acts out his own part; it is the reader's responsibility to fit these parts into the play as a whole. As a sop to form or a bow in the direction of technique, the book purports to be selections taken from a series of diaries starting with September 9, 1883 and ending with March 29, 1884. One day is chosen from each month and the events of that day are presented at some length. There is little action. It is the characters, with their stories, their adventures, and their personalities who govern the course of the novel and make it what it is.

Out of the welter of bullocky experience there emerge four distinct plots. The first is a romantic tragi-comedy involving Cooper, his sister Molly alias Alf Jones alias Nosey Alf, and Alf Morris alias Warrigal Alf. Then there is the satiric and lightly comic account of Collins' relations with Mrs. Beaudesart; the robust comedy of the naked philosopher, Collins, and his river adventures, which combines with the story of the deaf swagman. Finally, there is the tragedy of Rory O'Halloran, his marriage and his lost child. These stories blended with the other material form a miscellany of thought and action, humour and pathos, erudition and frivolity so precisely and delicately balanced that the resultant picture is a tapestry of Riverina life on a grand scale, with each minute detail woven carefully into place.

The stage is set at Ten Mile Pines some 250 miles north of the Victorian border. Five bullock teams and their drivers have stopped for their mid-day meal where they are joined by Collins who, as a Deputy-Assistant-Sub-Inspector and ninth grade government official, enjoys both leisure and freedom of action. The characters, old acquaintances and friends for the most part, are briefly sketched in and then are permitted to reveal their own personalities through their reminiscences, their language, and their prejudices. Here, in general conversation, the threads that are to form the warp and woof of the narrative are laid and the weaving begun. Though individual personalities differ greatly these men are bound together by occupational interest and a consciousness of class injustices.

Individualists themselves, the bullockies are united in their antagonism toward special privilege, in this instance personified by station owners and managers, which is intensified by the scarcity of grass and water. The only fodder for the bullocks was the meagre grass along the track; to trespass on station property was punishable by a fine of a shilling a head for each bullock. Therefore, "the penal suggestiveness of trespass-penalty touches the sullen dignity of [the bullocky's] nature; and the vague, but well-grounded fear of a law made and administered by his natural enemies [the squatters] makes him feel about as apprehensive as John Bunyan, though certainly more dangerous."[2] Reflections on social and ethical problems by men who had long hours to think and brood, and who quite often had the right on their side, are recurrent and significant but not always of first importance.

A month after the introductory meeting Collins is found near Willandra and here he introduces the story of Rory O'Halloran. The

[2]*Such is Life* (Sydney, 1944; Chicago, 1948), 37.

third episode, and the only piece of sustained humour in the volume, relates the experience of Collins, who bereft of clothing after a ducking in the Murray, finds himself on a much-travelled river road with nothing between his modesty and the mosquitoes but a leafy twig. The next scene enlarges on the story of Warrigal Alf and gives Furphy the opportunity to display his powers of mimicry and his command of dialect in Collins' experiences with three boundary riders: an Englishman, a Chinaman, and a Scotchman.

The extract from the Cornucopian diary for the fifth month is notable for the story of Rory O'Halloran's lost child which, told reminiscently over the campfire, is a moving and deeply felt expression of a tragedy only too common in pioneer communities. The sixth episode is laid on Runnymede station where Collins' romance with Mrs. Beaudesart is more clearly delineated and the stories of the slavey Ida and the boundary rider Nosey Alf are subtly revealed. The final episode, which is also at Runnymede, brings together all of the loose ends in the novel and clarifies some minor mysteries.

The heart of *Such is Life* is a very skilful blending of several varieties of comic writing. It recalls *Don Quixote* and *Tom Jones, Pickwick* and Charles Lamb. It has much of the earthiness and simplicity of Burns and some of the moral indignation of Tom Paine. Furphy liked people and delighted to show what good fun they were. So far as his own opinion of the book is concerned that, fortunately, is preserved in a review of *Such is Life* which Furphy wrote for the *Bulletin*.

> Apart from the historical value of the book, as seizing and fixing pictures of Riverina life, necessarily transitory, the portraiture deserves notice. Here the author is unconsciously at home. Rarely is a character revealed by verbal description, each speaks for himself; and a clean-cut individuality, consistent in its human inconsistence, is thrown on the page. Isocratic rather than democratic in tone, these sketches present each individual—squatter or sundowner—as a document of special interest, yet bearing the common seal. Hence the silhouette of any passer-by shows sharp and distinguished as the finished portrait of a familiar.
>
> Beyond all other Australian writers, Tom Collins is a master of idiom. There is no confusion of patois, no exaggeration of grammatical solecism in dialogue. As in actual life the education of each speaker is denoted by his phraseology; the dialect of each European bespeaks his native locality; and, above all, the language of the most unbookish bushman never degenerates into "coster."

Furphy was indeed interested in people, in their thoughts and in the language by which they expressed these thoughts. This language often makes difficult reading, but Furphy uses it to reveal rather than

to conceal the true personality of his characters. When they are profane he draws particular attention to it; when they are unconsciously vulgar he takes delight in such natural vulgarity. As an illustration, here is an example of the unlettered bullocky Dixon's description of a fight:

"You're a (adj.) liar," says I.

"What!" says he, an' with that he hauls off. "Put the (adj.) stuns on me."

"Where did he get you, Dixon?" I asked.

"Smeller," replied the narrator. "Well, I ain't used to sich rough (adj.) company, an' I never bin hit but once before this time, an' once since. Anyhow, my principle is to take the meanest (adj.) advantage I kin get—an' to take it *quick*, for the sake of peace and quietness. But this little (individual) seemed to want spankin' more nor squashin', so I goes for him bare-handed, an' he fetches me right (adv.) bang on the peeper. I follers him up ropeable—gosh! he was like a (adj.) eel; an' he lands me fair on the point; I drops like a cock, jumps up agen, an' goes for him lemons. No (adj.) use. He gits home on the butt o' the lug this time. I drops agen, an' rolls under the (adj.) billiard table.

"Come out o' thet, you dem scoundrel!" says he.

"I'll see you in (adj. pandemonium) fust," says I. "I ain't comin' out till you clear off," sez I. "I give you the (adj.) scon," says I.

"Big man in small compass," suggested Binney.

"Fair science frowned not on his humble birth," I [Collins] rejoined.

"Deceivin'est little (person) ever I dropped across," continued Dixon, with a touch of enthusiasm. "Grand thing to be a (adj.) snag like him. Sort o' gift. Gosh! he was there. *Volens et* (adj.) *potens*."[3]

Two additional passages might further illustrate Furphy's interest in people. In the first, a group of bullock drivers have been caught trespassing for grass by some lowly Chinese boundary riders and the ensuing mixed dialect dialogue reveals some interesting conflicts in character.

"Goo' molnin', Missa Helsmok!" chanted another yellow agony. "Nicee molnin', Missa Helsmok! Whaffoh you tellee me lah wintel you sclew my plully neck? Lak-no-ha-long-lee! Missa Smyte wakee you up—tyillin'-a-head you holse! Man-di-sling-lo-he!"

"Donder und blitzen!" retorted the Dutchman, striding toward the escort, which scattered at his approach. "Yomp off dem olt crocks, every man yack of you, und swelp mine Gott! I weel ponch der het of der vive of you altogedder mit, ef so moch der yudge seegs mons pot me into der yail bot!"

"Helsmok," said I, restraining him; "upon the heat and flame of thy distemper sprinkle cool patience. Let us accept the situation with dignity. Let us pit the honest frankness of the played-out Caucasian against the cunning of the successful Mongol." Then, addressing the

[3] *Rigby's Romance* (Sydney, 1946), 78.

Turanian horde, and adapting my speech to the understanding of our lowest types: "My word!" I exclaimed admiringly, "you take-um budgeree rise out-a whitepeller, John! Merrijig you! Borak you shift-um that peller bullock; borak you shift-um that peller yarraman. Whitepeller gib-it you fi' bob, buy-it opium. You savvy? Bale whitepeller tell-um boss. Bimeby whitepeller yabber like-it, 'Chinaman berry good'—yabber like-it, 'Comenavadrink, John'—yabber like-it, 'Chinaman brother b'long-a whitepeller.' You savvy, John?"

"Lak-hi-lo-hen-slung!" carolled a third Chow disdainfully. "You go hellee shut up! Eulopean allee sem plully whool. Lum-la-no-sun-hi-me!"[4]

The second is a brief description of a station slavey, underprivileged of nature as well as of society.

Ida, the handmaid of the barracks, was a common person. She certainly belonged to the same mammiferous division of vertebrata as Mrs. Beaudesart, but there the affinity ended with a jerk. In a word, she was the low-born daughter of a late poverty-stricken Victorian selector. Her father, after twelve years' manful struggle with a bad selection, had hanged himself in the stable; whereupon the storekeeper had sold the moveables, and the mortgagee the farm. Runnymede was Ida's first situation. Her wages, month by month, went to the support of her broken-down mother, then living frugally in a country township, taking care of Ida's remaining brother, who had been knocked out of shape through getting run-over, in a painfully protracted way, by a heavy set of harrows. Her other brother had unfortunately sat down to eat his lunch on the wrong side of a partly-grubbed tree.

Altogether, poor Ida had very little to be thankful for. Personally, she was, without any exception, the ugliest white girl I ever saw. She measured about twice as long from the chin to Self-Esteem as from Benevolence to Amativeness; not one feature of her face was even middling; her skin was a sort of neutral creamy tint; and she had a straggly goatee of dirty white, with woolly side-boards of the same colour, in lieu of the short, silky moustache which is the piquant trade-mark of our country-women. Besides this, she was lame, on account of the back-sinew of one of her ankles having been cut through by a reaping-machine; and in addition to all this, the fingers of her left hand had been snipped to a uniform length, through getting into the feed of a chaff-cutter. Montgomery had picked her purposely for the barracks—so, at least, he told Mrs. Montgomery; so she told Mrs. Beaudesart, and so the latter told me. For myself, I often felt an impulse to marry the poor mortal; partly from compassion; partly from the idea that such an action would redound largely to my honour; and partly from the impression that such an unattractive woman would idolize a fellow like me.[5]

Long before *Such is Life* was published, Furphy had settled down to the task of making a separate novel out of the excised story of Rigby. The reception given to *Rigby's Romance* was even more dis-

[4] *Such is Life*, 248-9.
[5] *Ibid.*, 263-4.

heartening than that accorded the first novel. Though greeted enthusiastically by the miners of Broken Hill upon its publication in serial form, it had few other readers. The abridged 1921 edition, made possible by the devoted loyalty of Miss Kate Baker, did not sell, and it was not until the publication in 1946 of a new and complete version that the novel was read with some critical interest.

In Furphy's opinion *Rigby's Romance* was his great work. "Socialism is in the atmosphere just at present," he wrote to Miles Franklin, "and I flatter myself that *R's R* speaks the last word on the moral aspects of that movement; the Socialism being sugar-coated with the sweetest romance you ever struck." There is no way of knowing at this late date how greatly the portion torn from *Such is Life* was altered and enlarged in order to make another full-length book, but it seems as though what was originally intended as another day in the diary account of Riverina life was merely expanded by the inclusion of much socialistic doctrine and given a semblance of form by the inclusion of romantic elements that are indeed "sugar-coated."

"The book takes the form of a symposium," writes Professor Howarth, "men of many shades of opinion, many varieties of experience, being gathered about a Master who expounds to them the doctrine of the time—and the future. *Rigby's Romance* is, at it were, a Socratic dialogue, set off with the 'motley' that is Tom Collins' habitual and only wear. A jester on 'this great stage of fools,' Collins opposes Rigby as a professed Conservative, in order to draw his fire and stimulate him to further exposition of his thought (which is Furphy's own)."[6]

One April day in 1884, Collins, on his way to join newly acquired partners in a cattle venture, finds himself in a river town on the Murray somewhere between Echucha and Yarrawonga. Here, by chance, he meets old acquaintances, among them the American Jefferson Rigby who proclaims himself "an agitator, a voice in the wilderness, preaching preparation for Palingenesis." It is Rigby who conducts the impromptu symposium into the small hours of the morning, the flow of conversation blending with the voices of the river.

In order to dilute the serious overtones of political theory a series of romantic love stories is introduced in retrospect, humorous, sordid, pathetic, or childish according to the individuality of the narrator. These stories have about them something of the charm of the old Tom Collins before his complete preoccupation with socialism. Since the avowed purpose of the novel, however, is to advance the cause of

[6] *Rigby's Romance*, ix.

state socialism it must be judged with that in mind. One of the earliest of proletarian novels it speaks the mind of the working man, lays bare grievances, propounds arguments, and in general serves notice to an indifferent world that a social revolution is in process.

Furphy's world was not prepared for the message contained in *Rigby's Romance*. Political treatises in the guise of fiction seemed downright immoral. Many would have agreed with Louis Esson that Furphy wrote "in the usual style of the badly educated man who has taken as models the articles in the Rationalist press and the penny encyclopedia"; that his ideas were poor, and that he wrote on subjects that were "quite beyond the range of his special training."[7] Few recognized the fact that Furphy's thoughts, whether good or bad, were the thoughts of increasingly large numbers of people all over the Western world, or recognized that his queries, whether learnedly articulated or not, were questions which could not for long be ignored with impunity. Today the wonder is not that Furphy tried to advance his ideas by means of a novel, but that these same ideas had not been foreseen, or at least recognized as the honest gropings of a troubled mind.

No man's philosophy can be simply defined; there are far too many complexities. Furphy believed that, "Unless the democratic movement makes people better—more intelligent, conscientious and humane—it is not worth support." The Church, which of all agencies should be concerned with humanity, had become a tool of privilege and forfeited his respect. "While the Church teaches you to pray 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven,' she tacitly countenances widening disparity in condition, and openly sanctions that fearful abuse which dooms the poor man's unborn children to the mundane perdition of poverty's thousand penalties. Is God's will so done in heaven?...better no religion at all—if such lack be possible—than one which concedes equal rights beyond the grave and denies them here."

The tragedy lies partly in that Furphy, in his disillusionment, was forced to ask this question, and partly in that he could find no responsible individual or agency that would vouchsafe an intelligent answer to it. It is a question that is always old and always new and each succeeding generation must find its own answers. Arnold Toynbee asks the same question and advances a number of arguments before arriving at the conclusion that the Kingdom of Heaven will never be established on earth.[8] Furphy would have been interested in Toynbee's discussion, might even have agreed with his arguments had they been available to him, but he was ahead of his own time.

[7]Vance Palmer, *Louis Esson and the Australian Theatre* (Melbourne, 1948), 29.
[8]Arnold Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial* (New York, 1948), 240-52.

Convinced that the Christian Church had signally failed to make a better world, that it was really a part of the old order which denied Christian principles and adhered to a belief in the survival of the greediest, Furphy turned to socialism as a way of life. He worked on the assumption that God's will should be done on earth and he felt that this objective could be achieved only through the socialist state. Nothing else could promise "anything like intelligent order in place of this rotten chaos" which he saw all around him. He believed that every country on earth could support its own population comfortably but that no country could afford "to sustain a section of the community in extravagant luxury, and the rest in bare decency," nor could any nation, no matter how bountifully endowed or ably administered, supply a superabundance for all. Socialism, to him, was merely a state of applied Christianity. Secular laws, based on God's legislation, strictly enforced and faithfully administered, would neutralize "the pride and covetousness so universally condemned in theory, yet so often condoned in practice," and the world could then turn to cheerful, honest work by which alone it could be enriched, enlightened, and saved. Applied Christianity seemed no more Utopian than the Lord's Prayer or the Sermon on the Mount. To the sceptic, Furphy would reply, "You must look for finality in mathematics, not in Christianity—which is Socialism."

Furphy wrote without knowledge of two world wars and the atomic age, yet his hopes and fears are strikingly modern. He believed in state socialism as many now believe in world union or government. He felt that it was the chief hope for the salvation of a sick and mismanaged planet and for the recovery of long-lost and much-needed spiritual values. There has been a tendency to regard him either as a hopeless idealist or as a prophet. He was neither. He was a skilled workman (in Collins' sardonic phrase a "member of the Lower Orders") who wanted to improve his own lot and that of his fellow men, in this world. He was a self-educated man whose wide reading and inquisitive mind would put many of the more formally educated to shame, yet so humble withal that he readily acknowledged his chief weakness, "an immoderate egotism, apparently undisciplined by controversy, and evidently fostered by solitary self-communion."

The Buln-Buln and the Brolga completes the cycle started by *Such is Life*. It is unlikely that much more of Furphy's prose will be uncovered with the possible exception of some short stories.[9] The title of this last work is made up of the aboriginal names for the Lyre

[9]Professor R. G. Howarth of the University of Sydney has prepared an edition of Furphy's short stories.

Bird and the Native Companion, the first being a pun on the chief weakness of Fred Falkland-Pritchard, the second a take-off on the physical characteristics of Bob Butler, protagonists of the story. The time is the spring of 1884, but now Tom Collins is a mechanical expert for an agricultural implement company.

This work is a continuation of the light-hearted elements of *Such is Life,* with Fred Pritchard the congenital liar and accomplished raconteur swapping stories with Barefoot Bob, the bush yarner. Of primary interest are the boyhood reminiscences of Collins, four complete adventures which shed some light upon Furphy's own adolescent years. Here, once again, Collins is the commentator and spectator who records what he sees with humour and gusto.

In a way it is unfortunate that Joseph Furphy was forced by circumstance to become an advocate of political and social reform, if for no other reason than that his political preachments have done much to obscure something of greater literary value. Furphy's sense of the injustice of things brought out the didactic, pedantic side of him which interferes very often with his natural talents. He was a born story-teller with an uncanny insight into masculine human nature; his women are wooden and unconvincing for the most part. He had the garrulity, the informality, the egalitarianism, and the independence associated with frontier conditions without the braggadocio, the provincialism, and the ignorance so often a part of such an environment. Men, with a job of work to do, go through the daily round of existence, discuss their experiences and reveal their thoughts with humour, bitterness, resignation, sentiment, or mild exaggeration, according to their natures. These characters, with the incomparable Tom Collins, placed against a background of their native Riverina and made articulate by the recorder of their chronicle, make up Furphy's contribution to literature. Though Australian in colour and in tone there is a universality about these books that places them among Australia's significant contributions to world literature.

Furphy did not live to enjoy the fruits of his labour. Early in 1905 he migrated to Western Australia to be with his children, but his heart remained in the Riverina. All over again he pioneered, working with his hands, and literature had to be relegated to his sparse leisure. He was haunted by the passing of time, by his inability to accomplish anything with his creative writing, and by the failure of his published work. He died September 13, 1912, without ever knowing that his books, which are a reflection of his own spirit, would come to be regarded as reflective of the spirit of Australia.

PARADISE LOST: THE DOUBLE STANDARD

MILTON MILLER

It had been a small mastery for him to have drawn out his legions into array and flanked them with his thunder; therefore he sent foolishness to confute wisdom, weakness to bind strength, despisedness to vanquish pride. The Reason of Church Government, II, i.

I

IT may well be that, inheriting the romantic reaction to the "theological and moral system under which Milton disciplined himself,"[1] we no longer feel that system's validity and so think it a contradiction of the poet's actual experience or, at all events, of our own; and we cannot, therefore, admit *Paradise Lost* on the poet's own terms. It was Dr. Johnson's view that the "substance of the narrative is truth" and, though exceptions may be made to the "accidental or adventitious parts, as to everything human," "the main fabric is immovably supported"; but few modern commentators or readers take such a view of *Paradise Lost* any longer. Thus C. S. Lewis, as a Christian guide, asks the uninitiated reader to assume, if he cannot believe, certain things about the theological and moral system of the poem in order to understand it; and, more recently, Mr. Rajan in his book on *Paradise Lost* asks us to look at the poem with the eyes of the seventeenth-century reader, hoping to make good as history what he cannot claim as truth. Particularly in relation to the role of Satan in the poem is it felt that the reader needs guidance. But in spite of such guidance there are those who continue to be impressed with Satan's heroic or tragic proportions and who find him and his crew rather more attractive and better realized than the heavenly actors generally. E. E. Stoll, for example, cautious about admitting Milton to be of the devil's party, is nevertheless forthright in upholding the superior charms of Hell and its inhabitants in *Paradise Lost*.

Though it seems to me true that an acquaintance with Milton makes "sufficiently absurd the romantic idea that he was of the devil's party without knowing it, that Satan was the real hero of *Paradise Lost*,"[2] it may, nevertheless, not be irrelevant to examine the whole question in a somewhat different way than is usual in dealing with

[1] J. H. Hanford, *A Milton Handbook* (New York, 1946), 343.
[2] Douglas Bush, *English Literature in the Earlier 17th Century* (Oxford, 1946), 379.

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it. The success of Satan is easily attested by our school anthologies, which consistently print, for an audience unlikely ever to get to know more, only the first two books of *Paradise Lost*. In fact, of course, no one denies Milton's achievement in his delineation of Satan, however it may be thought to need qualification in relation to the rest of the poem. But it seems equally undeniable at least that, however it be qualified, the portrait of Satan offers the reader a problem in the adjustment of his judgment to literary criteria given him within the poem itself such as he does not, for example, face in Shakespeare. This is the more remarkable when we reflect that "Milton was a doctrinal poet as Shakespeare was not."[3] For it is not quite accurate, in our own time at least, to say, as Mr. Bush does, that "the intelligent reader, who does not need the poet's guiding comments, reacts [to the speeches of Satan] as he reacts to the lawless speeches of Iago, Edmund, or Macbeth."[4] Indeed, Mr. Stoll, making a similar comparison, argues that Milton does not "himself altogether refrain from disparaging moral comment" on Satan, feeling constrained to "right the balance" because the presentation is so alluring, and finds that Milton is, in this respect, not unlike Shakespeare with his villains, who "sees to it that our judgement upon them is rightly directed."[5] Whatever the disparity in these views, it is clear that for Mr. Bush and Mr. Stoll equally the difficulty, in so far as they admit it to exist at all, is with Milton and not with Shakespeare.

In my own mind Satan's role by no means outweighs the rest of the poem, nor do his values emerge for me as in any sense the guiding values. I cannot agree with E. M. W. Tillyard that in certain passages Milton "is on the Devil's side,"[6] nor, more generally, that one cannot avoid admitting "that Milton did partly ally himself with Satan, that unwittingly he was led away by the creature of his own imagination."[7] Still less can I agree with a view like Mr. Stoll's, which makes a dichotomy between Milton the Puritan moralist and Milton the poet. M. Saurat's conclusion that Milton "was of the devil's party without knowing it; but he was also of God's party, and, what is more important, he knew it"[8] seems to me finally only little better, though a more ingenious way of saying the same thing. His position is more tenable and more interesting because he explicitly makes Milton the hero of his own poem and considers the action to

[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] E. E. Stoll, "Give the Devil His Due," *Review of English Studies*, XX, 119.
[6] E. M. W. Tillyard, *Milton* (London, 1934), 269.
[7] *Ibid.*, 277.
[8] Denis Saurat, *Milton: Man and Thinker* (London, 1946), 185.

take place within the soul of the poet himself. Having roughly equated the poet's soul with his poem, he has the advantage of being able to claim that the poet's own passion, Satan, which exists both within the poem and within the poet, must be mastered by the poet (rather than by God or the Son in the poem) within himself and, by projection, within his poem since the arena of poem and soul are really one. But similar ideas are, of course, explicitly or not, always in the background of any attempt to "partly ally" Milton with the devil's party. I am, though we may differ in accounting for the phenomenon of Satan, rather in agreement with Mr. Bush, Mr. Lewis, and Mr. Rajan that the values which emerge from the poem are not the Satanic ones, that Milton's "heart was not at war with his head and that his Satan is on the whole what he intended to make him."[9]

But it still remains to account for the persistence with which readers, even after the theological and moral system and Milton's idea of order have been understood, either misunderstand or wrongly admire not Satan's portrait simply but his role in the poem as they do not Iago's, Edmund's, or Macbeth's; and to account for it outside of the notion that Satan is really the hero of *Paradise Lost* because Milton unconsciously made him so. We ought, no doubt, to understand the traditional doctrines of law and order, whether on Christian or on historical grounds, and the difference between right reason and passion. We ought also to understand them in a Christian frame; and only when we do, does the poem fall into place as it ought to, and its vision and grasp of the whole seem genuine and great. But aside from the matter of what Dr. Johnson calls the substantial truth of the narrative, which he took for granted, there are the "accidental or adventitious parts," and it is to these we may look for those exceptions he admits may be made. Right reason may be said to inform the poem as a whole, but the path has many turnings where it is possible to lose one's way, not because of a lack of guiding comments or signs to direct us rightly but rather because the signs that do exist are not always as straightforward as one could wish for a reader who has no firm hold of his own right reason. I am not at the moment interested to determine whether this ought to be considered a fault in the poem; one may even conceivably take it as only another mark of its complexity, but it is a difficulty not merely in the reader but in the poem. This is what I shall be concerned to show and try to account for in terms of the poem itself.

[9]B. Rajan, *Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth Century Reader* (London, 1947), 106.

II

Though the creative effort in Hell is a puny effort compared with the Son's creation of the world in Book VII (in the description of which one certainly does feel what Mr. Tillyard calls "the enormous reserves of divine power: before it the angels simply fall astonished; the tumult of chaos is stilled in a moment"[10]), still the creative power of the fallen angels is no small part of the impression they leave. The picture of Hell is meant by its contrast with the actual glory of Heaven to make the loss the fallen angels suffer seem only the greater. This kind of implicit contrast is an important part of the method of the whole poem. The false glory is painstakingly exalted in terms similar to those in which the true is, or should be, and it is meant both to reflect the inexpressible splendour of the true and to impress the relative shabbiness (or some other aspect) of the synthetic substitute. What is splendid in Hell is, as it were, the memory of Heaven. The exalted though inferior and false splendour of certain aspects of Hell, when it is described in terms in which the true alone is describable, is meant to point up and reflect not the beauty of Hell but the inexpressible and true splendour of Heaven whose loss the fallen angels lament. At the same time the very splendour of Hell, no more than a wretched and diminished memory of Heaven lost, points up the actual wretchedness of Hell itself. In a similar though inverted way Satan's later reaction to the beauty of Eden emphasizes not only the glory of that paradise but the actual wretchedness of Hell to which even paradise seems like Heaven. The exaltation of Hell, then, bears an implicit contrast within itself by means of which the exaltation is meant to be transferred from what is being described, the false in terms of the true, to the source of the truly and inexpressibly exalted, and the method requires that the transference be made by the reader. The difficulty is not only that the reader cannot always be relied on to see what is implicit and make the right transference of the exaltation from the false to the true, which it is meant only to reflect, but that the terms in which the true glory is itself described may often scatter our concentration on the intention still more and make the transference even more difficult. While the picture of Hell, for example, permits us to carry away some sense of beauty and the creativity of its denizens, Heaven has for the most part been described at prodigious war and at one time nearly in ruins. A great part of our time in Heaven is spent during Satan's occupation of it, and his work there leaves us with a not unmixed impression of

[10]Tillyard, *Milton*, 278.

destruction in Heaven, as of construction later in Hell. Our literary adjustment is thus made rather less certain and more difficult. Other details too in the comparison between Heaven and Hell "such as the digging in the soil of Heaven for sulphur and nitre (where the soil of Hell, it may be remarked, yielded gold to the miner),"[11] do not help to make the proper transfer an easy one. Mr. Stoll, for instance, finds that the music in Hell "is finer if not nobler than in Heaven; the discourse . . . more philosophical." In fact Hell is full of music just to "our sublunary taste."[12] Details can be multiplied, but it seems certain at least that the feelings evoked in Hell are not entirely unequivocal and that when we get to Heaven the directional signs are often no less so. The effect of Satan's entrance into paradise is not in the same way equivocal at all even though we first enter it with Satan himself. It is not that, even before the fall, he does not influence our feelings about paradise but that the most abiding impression left us is of its idyllic charm and beauty, which Satan's psychological conflict and the background of Hell only deepen for us. This gives us, I think, an extended example of a part of the poem in which the same method of contrast succeeds admirably.

We have indicated, by way of introduction to a further and more important consideration of the same problem, a few general difficulties in literary adjustment for the reader of *Paradise Lost* centring around some of the descriptions of the contrasted realms of Heaven and Hell. It is possible to go on now to examine the problem more closely in relation to some of the general values or standards set up within the poem as a frame of reference either explicit or implicit in it.

III

There are two general standards by which action is judged in *Paradise Lost*. One may be called the heroic, the other super-heroic. The first acts as a sub-frame of reference, the second is an inclusive standard by which the heroic itself is finally judged. Thus, to act or not to act is for the fallen angels ultimately equally vain. They are, as Beelzebub recognizes, "Foil'd with loss irreparable," and God clearly proclaims to the assembled angels before the fall that whoever disobeys that day falls

> Into utter darkness, deep ingulft, his place
> Ordain'd without redemption, without end. (V, 614-15)[13]

[11]Walter Raleigh, *Milton* (London, 1915), 99.
[12]"Give the Devil His Due," 117, 119.
[13]All quotations from *Paradise Lost* are from the edition of Merritt Y. Hughes (New York, 1935).

But even after one has decided that the fallen angels are doomed to futility and that, in that ultimate context, action itself becomes meaningless, it remains true just the same that they not only do act (with most important results within the poem) but that their action is judged with reference to something not entirely related to its ultimate futility. Likewise, the good angels are judged within a similar frame not entirely related to ultimate goodness. There is then a kind of intermediary realm of judgment which is prominently set up within the poem and has an important place in it. For example, it is said in condemnation of Belial that

> his thoughts were low;
> To vice industrious, but to Nobler deeds
> Timorous and slothful: . . . . (II, 115-17)

and it is in this context that we must also judge him. Indeed, his speech, before and after, is punctuated by the poet's explanatory words of disapproval. It is to be expected that a devil will be industrious to vice and devoid of noble deeds; how can he be otherwise and yet irredeemable? But obviously that is not what is meant. In conceiving the situation in terms of *dramatis personae* who are to act, the poet has decided to differentiate them as characters thus bringing into play the standard of judgment we have chosen to call heroic. And it is in these terms Belial is condemned, beyond the general condemnation of his falling off from obedience to God, which he has in common with the other rebel angels. In the same terms Satan is exalted both by his own fellows and, within context, by the poet himself.

It is particularly true of the distinction in merit between Satan and Belial—though indeed between Satan and all the rest—that their differentiation in character is judged on the heroic standard. And on that standard, however we are finally to judge the standard itself, ambition is a virtue, which Satan has and Belial does not. He seemed, the poet says of Belial,

> For dignity compos'd and high exploit:
> But all was false and hollow; . . . . (II, 111-12)

His words

> cloth'd in reason's garb
> Counsell'd ignoble ease, and peaceful sloth,
> Not peace: . . . . (II, 226-8)

If ambition, though "varnisht o'er with zeal" (II, 485), is on this standard a virtue of some sort raising Satan to his "bad eminence" as,

in fact, in exactly this context we are told it is ("for neither do the Spirits damn'd Lose all thir virtue"; II, 482-3), yet, considering that there is for them no way out, to do or not to do being ultimately equally futile, Belial at least has the advantage (the virtue perhaps) of admitting the futility. In one part of his great speech he exhibits a stoical determination in itself not unadmirable ("To suffer, as to do, Our strength is equal"; II, 199-200) and shows that wisdom should have prepared them for exile, pain, or any other "sentence of thir Conqueror."

> I laugh, when those who at the Spear are bold
> And vent'rous, if that fail them, shrink and fear
> What yet they know must follow. . . . (II, 204-6)

Mr. Stoll describes Belial admirably when he says of him that "his thought is discreet and devious, his rhetoric supple and insinuating, his rhythm flowing, his emphasis hovering, his cadence a dying fall."[14] Almost imperceptibly he changes the whole question of the debate and makes Moloch's furious despair seem cowardly rather than blindly heroic. All the fallen angels, not Belial alone, recognize God's omnipotence and are willing to subscribe to compromise. Satan alone makes no public admission of omnipotence. Yet he is no better off than the rest, worse rather. His ambition has only made him "Supreme In misery; such joy Ambition finds" (IV, 91-2):

> Me miserable! which way shall I fly
> Infinite wrath, and infinite despair? . . . (IV, 73-4)

And in the "lowest deep a lower deep" threatens to devour him. If Belial wants to avoid a worse fate by no longer actively opposing God, that choice is possible within the context of the poem, for, as the poet says of Satan, "of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue" (IV, 26). It is true, however, that Satan, unlike Belial and the others, entertains no false hopes. They do not understand as he does just how profound the lower depths are. There is only "infinite despair." In his recognition of this aspect of their situation he is the least self-deceived. What Satan wants is to work evil out of good, which is possible. To make evil seem good, except for a specious moment, is not; nor is it the same thing as turning evil to good, as God is said to do, by creating an actual good, that is by changing the situation. Yet ultimately it is obvious that neither Satan nor Belial nor the rest can be successful because there is no hope; the sentence is eternal, "without redemption, without end"; and because God is on the other side working actual good out of evil. But how is one to judge as between

[14]E. E. Stoll, "Belial as an Example," *Modern Language Notes,* XLVIII, 419.

Satan and Belial? Belial, knowing the futility of revenge, tries impossibly to make good out of evil; Satan, knowing the futility of their whole situation, can yet not rule out revenge. It is a closed circle, but in it we are expected to admire Satan above Belial, and the difference is between inflamed ambition or high designs and ignoble ease or a resignation on false terms. True submission is of course ruled out for both. Yet if Satan is greater than Belial, there is a sense in which, if we are to keep good and evil in action clear within the context of the poem, we ought to admire Satan less even if we do not therefore admire Belial more; Satan's ambition should seem worse than Belial's stoic apathy.

Here we are at the centre of our difficulty. There may be no doubt how we are to feel about the rebel angels in general, but there is a complicating element. For Satan, the embodiment of evil in the poem, is clearly, by the heroic standard, to be admired above his cohorts, and this heroic eminence he retains through the greatest part of the poem. It is not a matter of a sentence or two, but of the success of the whole portrait of Satan. And the difficulty is not that, as Mr. Stoll puts it, Milton does not altogether refrain from disparaging moral comment on Satan. It is rather that the disparaging comment is not at all according to the heroic standard, in relation to which Belial is condemned, but on another and more inclusive standard altogether, the super-heroic, which we shall soon see is rather inadequately exemplified in described action.

But let us first look at a few of the difficulties involved in the heroic standard itself. One of the central aspects of the description of Satan, related to his eminence and leadership, is his undaunted courage in standing alone. But it is necessary to remember that, on the heroic scale, as in the language used, it is not different in degree from, let us say, the courage of Abdiel among the revolted host; he too is "fearless, though alone" (V, 875). Indeed, this quality of single physical courage (and its lack, as when the good angels do not offer to undergo death or the bad to fly alone through chaos) is characteristic of both sides in the heroic frame of reference. Even the Son, though he boasts no power but God's, is glorified by standing alone; not only in undertaking to suffer death in expiation of man's disobedience, but in his single victory over the rebel powers in Heaven: "they all, Or I alone against them" (VI, 819-20). And when He returns in his triumphal chariot it is as "Sole Victor from th' expulsion of his Foes" (VI, 880). Indeed, the Son is conscious that he is taking over the Satanic standard of force when he goes out alone

against the rebel host, "since by strength They measure all, of other excellence Not emulous" (VI, 820-2).

In *Paradise Lost* both sides among the angels use force of the most prodigious kind, and it seems clear that we are meant to admire, while being shocked by, the scale on which it is exerted, threatening Heaven itself. And there is actually no great differentiation in the kind of weapon used. Obviously Satan's cannon are unfair and devilish weapons, but of course there is God's thunder in the offing. Here one might have expected a differentiation, but there is none even in the language. Satan's cannon shot is described as "chain'd Thunderbolts" (VI, 589) and the explosion as "Thunder" (VI, 606), and when the Son comes, he too has "three-bolted Thunder" (VI, 764) and in his right hand grasps "ten thousand Thunders" (VI, 836). But even in the matter of the passions aroused by the use of force there is a curious lack of differentiation. In Book IV Uriel recognizes Satan on top of Niphates because he has become distorted by passion, enabling Uriel to tell easily that he is not a heavenly inhabitant, "For heav'nly minds from such distempers foul Are ever clear" (IV, 118-19). All the more curious must it seem then that during the war in Heaven the angels fighting for God are willing, in their opposition to Satan's devilish engines, to uproot and disorder Heaven itself because "Rage prompted them at length" (VI, 635). Indeed, God's comment on this "Wild work in Heaven" on both sides in the war, is that they have "to disorder'd rage let loose the reins" (VI, 696). This rage in Heaven makes it only the more difficult for the reader to differentiate between good and evil in action, the more so when he remembers that in Hell the rebel angels are described as moving in perfect phalanx to such music as raised

> To highth of noblest temper Heroes old
> Arming to Battle, and instead of rage
> Deliberate valour breath'd. . . . (I, 552-4)

Rage in Heaven and "instead of rage Deliberate valour" in Hell! Here again, as with the destructive side of Heaven and the constructive side of Hell, we are left with a not unmixed impression, even in connection with the heroic standard, which makes the reader's adjustment to the criteria offered for judgment of the poet's intention less certain and more difficult than it perhaps should be.

It is true, of course, that our judgment of the heroic standard in *Paradise Lost* is incomplete if we do not firmly understand that Milton is not holding it up as the highest but, on the contrary, as usually vicious. Thus the Father praises the Son as by merit Son of

God rather than by birthright alone, and he is "Found worthiest to be so by being Good, Far more than Great or High" (III, 310-11). This is, of course, what puts Satan's inflamed thoughts "of highest design" into their proper context within the inclusive super-heroic standard. The poet himself tells us of his preference for "the better fortitude Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom Unsung" (IX, 31-3), though he has already done no mean job of describing the titanic struggle of enraged rather than patient angels in Heaven. But the difficulty is to know when to apply the heroic scale (as with Belial and Satan) and when the super-heroic of patience and martyrdom. If the distinction had been maintained in described action or if the distinctions in language had been clearly maintained, the reader might have had unerring signs of direction. But, as it is, his difficulty is an understandable one. When Michael, for example, after the fall of Adam, gives him a prevision of what is to come as a result of his disobedience, he makes it clear that conquerors, glorious and heroic though they erringly be made to seem by perverted mankind ("Man-slaughter shall be held the highest pitch Of human Glory"; XI, 693-4), yet are "Destroyers rightlier call'd and Plagues of men" (XI, 697). Yet when Adam asks him to explain how it is that neither peace nor war makes man happy, "for now I see Peace to corrupt no less than War to waste" (XI, 783-4), Michael explains that the doers of great exploits whom Adam saw were, even in their heroic deeds, of "true virtue void" (XI, 790) and were thus easily corrupted by the luxurious wealth of peace. These were the conquerors; but even those they conquered were dissolute and without true faith in God; and He, seeing that their piety was feigned, refused to help them in battle. They accept their fate but

> Thenceforth shall practice how to live secure,
> Worldly or dissolute, on what thir Lords
> Shall leave them to enjoy; . . . . (XI, 802-4)

There is no way out for either of them; there is neither exploit nor acceptance, peace corrupts no less than war wastes. The conquerors, like Satan, have ambition but are finally overwhelmed, and the conquered who, like Belial, merely "practice how to live secure" are served no better. Noah is "the only Son of light In a dark Age" (XI, 808-9), but he is not seen in action, and the difficulty is to distinguish the criteria of good and evil in described action. Noah is righteous, but since we do not see him act, his righteousness may not easily be distinguished from self-righteousness; he is really no guide. And we have no clear guide (the good angels, we have seen,

become enraged no less than the others and make "Wild work in Heaven") unless it be the Son, who is to die for man's disobedience. His is, of course, the ideal of true virtue, "Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom" in action, but in Heaven, which is where we see him in the poem, the Son is the wielder of God's thunderbolts, which is a rather different role.

A simple example of the differentiation of good and evil in described action may best be shown by an instance the poem itself gives us in the two offerings of first fruits by Cain and Abel. First Cain appears:

> *A sweaty Reaper* from his Tillage brought
> First Fruits, the green Ear, and the yellow Sheaf,
> *Uncull'd, as came to hand;*

then Abel:

> *a Shepherd next*
> *More meek* came with the Firstlings of his Flock
> *Choicest and best;* . . . . (XI, 434-8; my italics)

We are, within the context, prepared by this choice of words and action to discover that Abel's sacrifice is acceptable, "The other's not, for his was not sincere" (XI, 443). The distinction is clear enough and more artful even than may at first appear.

But we have seen that the distinctions are not nearly so clear in other parts of the poem. Though the super-heroic standard is that of patience and heroic martyrdom, the deeds described by Raphael as deserving memorial among the heavenly host are not deeds of patience and martyrdom at all but of heroism in battle, and we remember that some of the fallen angels also sing their "partial" songs about "Thir own Heroic deeds and hapless fall" (II, 549). And the Son's thunder, if more potent, is not unlike Satan's in kind. The heroic standard of excellence requires physical courage on both sides, and the rebel angels are as steadfast as the loyal, "disdaining flight, Or faint retreat" (VI, 798-9). Satan may be said to symbolize pre-eminently certain aspects of the heroic standard, ambition, high designs, physical courage, and daring, as much or more than anyone in *Paradise Lost* ("Satan is the most heroic subject that ever was chosen for a poem," Hazlitt has said[15]), and he is clearly to be admired in the heroic context above his companions. Belial's own standard is not the heroic one: he wants peace not war, but his peace is branded "peaceful sloth," "ignoble ease." Surely there is a diffi-

[15]William Hazlitt, "On Shakespeare and Milton," *Lectures on the English Poets* (World's Classics), 95.

culty here. For if we look at Satan and Belial from the point of view of patience and martyrdom by which the poet condemns the heroic standard, Belial's stoic patience, for all its epicurean tint, is closer to the super-heroic ideal than Satan's ambition. It may be true that Belial's patience is based on false hope, but then Satan's ambition is surely not more noble; that we are called on to admire Satan above Belial, as in context we are, may seem to twist the ultimate standard enough to throw both somewhat out of focus. If there is a true physical prowess and exploits that are not merely vain because they partake of true virtue, they do not seem well defined or differentiated in the described action of the poem since the descriptive terms used for Satan's ambitious designs against order and the good angel's heroic defence of it tend to confuse the virtue with the vice rather than to define it; just as Belial's kind of patience, being the type of vice whose adjacent virtue is true patience and heroic martyrdom, in being disparaged in favour of Satan's ambition tends also to confuse the view in which the virtue of true patience itself is held up as the ultimate criterion in the poem. It may well be that as between one vice and another there is no choice, but if we must choose, as for the sake of differentiation of character the poet does, Belial's vice might seem to be merely self-destructive while Satan's is all-destructive. Indeed, even the heroic virtue itself of the angels defending Heaven tends, as we have seen, to be all-destructive while heroic martyrdom is, in the person of the Son, saving, a sacrifice of self that the whole may not be destroyed. For the sake then of keeping the ultimate value clear and directing the reader, Satan's heroic ambition set off against Belial's stoic patience or apathy does not seem of much help. That the poet should have chosen Noah's virtue as the type of the Son and found no loophole for the rest of the people before the flood who are of "true virtue void" is in itself perhaps understandable, but in Hell, where there is no real virtue to choose from, though the angels are said not to have lost all of theirs, Belial's vice would seem to deserve at least no greater disparagement than Satan's according to the ultimate standard of the virtue of heroic patience.

I have tried to show that a difficulty exists, not only in the mind of the unintelligent, un-Christian, or unhistorical reader but in the poem itself. It is possible on this basis to judge the values of the poem as confused and the poet as party to the confusion. And indeed there are many other elements of shifting focus, not in relation to the heroic standard alone, which we have not mentioned at all because they do not fit within our limits. It is possible, but it would

be rash. We have looked at a few aspects of the difficulty for the uninitiated reader in order to claim that his difficulty is a real one; it remains to see to what extent the initiated one may be excused for seeing no difficulty at all.

IV

A poem, Mr. Lewis tells us, "can be considered in two ways—as what the poet has to say, and as the *thing* which he *makes*. From the one point of view it is an expression of opinions and emotions; from the other, it is an organization of words which exists to produce a particular kind of patterned experience in the readers."[16] And in a narrative poem, quoting Mr. Rajan, the "truth must be revealed in action, not reflection, and so the qualities which the poem portrays are most convincing when they are made to emerge from the situations in which they are presented."[17] Both these things need to be kept in mind, for they help us to go to the root of the difficulty in *Paradise Lost*. I should, however, wish to emphasize the qualification that the action Mr. Rajan speaks of must be thought of as part of the *thing* which the poet *makes* with words, that is as described action, and it is in that the truth must be revealed to the reader. But in *Paradise Lost* there is usually, we have seen, no radical difference between the action of the good angels and the bad; they act more or less like one another according to the heroic standard the poet has set up within the poem. Moreover, the heroic scale is a sliding one in terms of which Satan may be admired above Belial, yet true patience and martyrdom above heroic action. Heroic action, if good, needs true virtue, but we are never given a sufficiently clear example of it in action—unless the example of the good angels in the battle in Heaven be taken as such. But even they exhibit rage and spread destruction not differentiated from that of the rebels. Yet if there is no differentiation in described action, that is not to say that there is no differentiation. The true standard on which the poem as a whole must be judged is right reason and the supreme Christian example of the Son's sacrifice of love. "In thee," the Father says to him:

> Love hath abounded more than Glory abounds,
> Therefore thy Humiliation shall exalt
> With thee thy Manhood also to this Throne;
> Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt Reign. . . . (III, 312-15)

Within the poem even the rebel angels, including Satan himself, realize that in the end they act not in relation to a standard they

[16]C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (London, 1946), 2.
[17]Rajan, *Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth Century Reader*, 105.

themselves set up, but to one that obtains in spite of and beyond them, and in relation to which they are free to choose obedience (right reason) or rebellion, but which they cannot change and whose consequences are inescapable and just. Since right reason in them is perverted after the fall, they talk like Thrasymachus in the *Republic,* as if good were merely the will of the stronger. But in the end even Satan admits God's justice. If he can say "Evil be thou my Good" (IV, 110), it is only because he has before said, "all Good to me is lost" (IV, 109), knowing that there is a distinction and that the good is with God on the side of right reason. Abdiel and Satan are comparable for their physical courage in standing alone; the true distinction does not lie there. They are differentiated not in physical courage on the false heroic standard of violence but in moral courage. Abdiel has borne, for the testimony of truth, "Universal reproach, far worse to bear Than violence" (VI, 34-5). Satan has courage for his own ambition; Abdiel is courageous not for himself but in the cause of truth. The difference is, of course, immense, like that between a courageous criminal fighting it out against odds and Socrates refusing to escape from prison because of his belief in what is right.

In my earlier discussion of the merits of Satan and Belial, I did not point out that, within the commonweal of the angels in Hell, Satan is praised for undertaking a hazardous task for the good of all, "much they prais'd, That for the general safety he despis'd His own" (II, 480-2). His motives are not pure, of course, but ambition has nevertheless led him to disregard his own safety for what is thought of as the general safety; he does not live for himself alone. In this connection it is worth comparing the third canto of Dante's *Inferno.* There we find within the gate of Dante's Hell are

> the wretched souls of those, who lived
> Without or praise or blame, with that ill band
> Of angels mix'd, who nor rebellious proved,
> Nor yet were true to God, but for themselves
> Were only. . . .

It is in something like this category that Belial partly fits though the comparison is by no means an exact one.

> Fame of them the world hath none,
> Nor suffers; mercy and justice scorn them both.
> Speak not of them, but look, and pass them by.[18]

If Belial does not entirely fit here, this may at least help us to understand how one might prefer Satan's ambition to Belial's patient

[18]Dante, *Inferno,* trans. by H. F. Cary, III, 34-8, 47-9.

temporizing when "Infinite wrath, and infinite despair" are themselves conceived as spiritual values on the opposite side of the celestial vision of the angels receiving from the sight of God "Beatitude past utterance" (III, 62). Milton, I think, did so conceive them.

From the difficulties inherent in the poem it is true, I think, that a confusion of sympathies and ethical and literary criteria is possible, particularly when it is not as self-evident to the reader as it was to Samuel Johnson that "the substance of the narrative is truth." One may even admit some actual, rather than merely apparent, confusion; nevertheless, the informing spirit of the poem as a whole is not confusion, nor is it an inversion of traditional philosophical and Christian values. It possesses a unity of thought and vision in which both reason and the revelation of the great Christian example of "Patience and Heroic Martyrdom" are the controlling factors. Yet one does notice a failure in the described action not only to make sufficient differentiation between evil and good in action but, and connected with it, a failure to give as free reign as possible to the good in action. One might have expected the loyal angels, being fixed in the principle of the good, to have acted more intricately and more freely than they do,

> Eccentric, intervolv'd, yet regular
> Then most, when most irregular they seem: . . . . (V, 623-4)

But, in fact, their position seems more cautiously dependent than it should, even at times more merely accessory than necessary. Raphael, for example, accounting for his absence at Adam's creation, explains that he was sent with others to guard the gates of Hell that God at his work might be sure not to be disturbed by spies or enemies.

> Not that they durst without his leave attempt,
> But us he sends upon his high behests
> For state, as Sovran King, and to enure
> Our prompt obedience. (VIII, 237-40)

Man himself is said to graduate from the imperfect discipline of the Mosaic law which is

> but giv'n
> With purpose to resign them in full time
> Up to a better Cov'nant, disciplin'd
> From shadowy Types to Truth . . .
> From imposition of strict Laws, to free
> Acceptance of large Grace. . . . (XII, 300-5)

Of the angels we might have expected no less. But the only large-scale approximations of this freedom from the "imposition of strict Laws" which we see in operation are connected with Adam and Eve before the fall and with Satan rather than with the good angels—and in both cases freedom leads to failure. Adam and Eve disobey and fall from grace; Satan conceives it wrong for laws and edicts to be imposed on those "who without law Err not" (V, 798-9). But of course he errs in the midst of this very speech (giving "Law to God"; V, 822), as Abdiel points out, and he falls from Heaven soon after. The independent action I mean, which we do not see successfully put into action in the poem, is not, like Satan's, based on a passionate renunciation of God's authority, but it is the operation of that true liberty "which always with right Reason dwells Twinn'd" (XII, 84-5). The good angels appear to act rather by edict or law than with that freedom which would show their mastery of the principle.

But it is just that partial failure to reveal and differentiate the truth in action which is at the root of the difficulties we have been concerned to notice in the poem. That the poet knows the distinction between good and evil and maintains it in *Paradise Lost* as an integrating part of the poem is certainly true. Satan's progressive deterioration has, for example, often been noticed. But the difficulty is twofold and connected. On one side there is a lack of straightforward signs in carefully differentiated language, or even in action, which would distinguish between the evil actors and the good. On the other side, the method of the poem invites us to see, in the painstaking exaltation of the evil actors in terms similar to those in which the good alone can be described, the implicit contrast between them and the inexpressible splendour of the good lost. But the right transference of the exaltation from evil to the good, which is only partially reflected in it, is hindered by the very lack of clearly differentiated language, which is not separate from the method itself. Our concentration on the intention is scattered rather than guided and the right transference is made difficult, and for some almost impossible.

The poem is complex, and this method is one side of its complexity. But one may claim a kind of higher synthesis for the poet in which the difference in the look of action is just the illusion that does not count (hypocrisy, Milton reminds us, is "the only evil that walks Invisible, except to God alone"; III, 683-4), and what does count is the spring of action, right reason in the mind alone. Whatever be the lapses—or even confusions—this is, I think, one of the syntheses the poem is trying to make. On earth, after the fall, paradise

and Hell are both within. If one does not believe that act and motive are really separate, or that in a narrative poem they should be; or if it be objected that the poet introduces confusion by using what standard at the moment best suits him, it can only be answered that the ultimate standard is, and is meant to be, the controlling one, the one which helps unify the poem—and unity of purpose among other unities the poem does have. If the poet be accused of a lack of humility and be thought to have taken unwarranted liberties not only with the reader but with his own merely human state, this may warrant rejecting him as guide to life, but it does not warrant saying that he has inverted the traditional standards consciously or unconsciously. There are not two Miltons though there are two standards, and if the poet be in error, it is not in unconsciously accepting the Satanic one but in seeming to represent that for mere flesh and blood there is no way out of the closed circle except through its own "fortitude Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom"; as if superhuman virtue were alone efficacious and called for from ordinary mortality. For this the poet has already paid a heavy price in generations of readers who have found, and continue to find, in Satan the expression of noble humanity on the heroic, Promethean level, willing to forget the lesson of obedience and dependence Adam learned and finally even the vision of the ultimate order which is always

> by things deem'd weak
> Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
> By simply meek; . . . . (XII, 567-9).

THE FUTURE OF THE FAMILY FARM

David L. MacFarlane

IN its economic setting the family farm is the last bulwark of the small independent entrepreneur, the man who combines the roles of the capitalist, the manager, and the labourer. In its political setting it represents a decentralization of power necessary to the safeguarding of liberty. In its social setting it provides a wholesome atmosphere for the development of individual initiative and responsibility, for a healthful life, and a well-balanced and rich social experience.

This is the case made for the family farm as one of the most important, indeed almost sacred, institutions of our society. However, these claims, while possessing the substance of truth, are partially vitiated. In the first place, to the extent that farm pressure groups are active, there is no decentralization of political power. Secondly, the incomes produced on fully half of our Canadian farms are so low that the family members are ground down by poverty; in these circumstances a healthful, well-balanced social life and the development of initiative and responsibility cannot be achieved.

Despite these limitations, the significance of the family farm as a stabilizing force in our economic, political, and social life cannot be stressed too greatly. In fact, there is a growing concern lest it be displaced or give way to an alternative organization of agriculture, less favourable to the social and political life of the nation. The fear is that the rapid pace of technological advance in agriculture will make economically feasible only large units—so large that they will no longer be identified with the management and labour of the single family.

The influence of such changes in the organization of our farm industry would certainly not be limited to the rural or agricultural segment of our economy. The family farm has a direct and important bearing on our urban life because of the large flow of migration from farm to city. The rate of this flow has apparently exceeded an average of 50,000 persons a year in the past two decades. Furthermore, this migration is almost limited to young people of eighteen to thirty, those just reaching their most productive age. The reasons for this persistent trend in migration are (1) the higher birth rate in rural areas, and (2) the declining relative importance of agriculture in our total society. (In 1900 some 45 per cent of the Canadian population was classed as rural farm; the proportion is now less than 25 per cent.) And this migration from farm to city is important in

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more than quantitative terms. Every study of the origins of those who occupy important places in the professions, in industry, and in commercial life turns up a strikingly large proportion of men who started life on the farm. A recent American study concluded that over three-fourths of all "leaders" in the arts and sciences, in the professions, and in commerce and industry come from rural backgrounds. This finding is probably equally applicable to Canada.

Meanwhile, farming has been more and more mechanized. The farm industry has had to digest or assimilate into its system, not without great pains, a doubling of the number of tractors in less than a decade, a marked increase in the efficiency and adaptability of this machine, and the development of a whole complement of special tractor implements. That most arduous of all farm tasks, hay making, has now been put on a mechanical basis. However, these changes represent only one side of the technological revolution. On the other are the biological or non-mechanical advances. Such striking innovations as hybrid corn, rust and sawfly resistant wheat, artificial insemination, and a whole range of powerful weed killers and bug killers date back but few years.

The impact of these developments is best summarized in the doubling of labour productivity in agriculture in the past generation. The most remarkable fact is that the industry has gone through changes of this magnitude with relatively little evidence of a change in its basic structure. The family farm, which has been the prevailing form of organization since the earliest settlement of this country, persists today. But can it survive the quickening pace of technological advance?

Changes in the organizational structure of Canadian agriculture are occurring—changes difficult to observe or measure. They are not endangering the family farm but are changing its internal character and affecting its traditional position in our society. The most important of these changes, perhaps, is the increase in the amount of capital needed for farming. There is a strong economic pressure in the direction of expanding the size of a farm to the point where the unit is large enough for efficient use of modern machinery. As our economy, farm and non-farm, becomes more commercialized there is an increasing tendency on the part of the farmer to establish an income goal, an annual net income (say $2,000) large enough to yield an acceptable standard of living through a long period of years. Farm management studies suggest that it is necessary for a farmer to command at least $15,000 to $20,000 in capital to meet these standards of mechanical efficiency and of minimum income. Summarizing this matter in rough

and ready terms, the development of farm machinery and other more subtle changes have doubled the capital requirements of the Canadian farm. They have increased, but not doubled, the land area requirement.

There are no definitive data indicating what proportion of Canadian farms come up to the double standard indicated above. However, there is evidence that the proportion is certainly no more than 20 per cent, and perhaps no more than 15. This is the proportion of our farms which are fairly well mechanized, and of moderate to large size. Generally, these farms occupy the most productive land. They produce well over half of the volume of farm products entering commercial channels. The balance of our farms, some 80 to 85 per cent, tend to be small to medium in size, not well mechanized, and often on poor and infertile land. In aggregate they account for less than one-half of our commercial farm production.

This significant conclusion is borne out by the *Census of Canada,* which informs us, for instance, that one-half of the 150,000 farms in the province of Quebec are subsistence or part-time farms. By "subsistence" farms I mean those where more than one-half of the produce is consumed on the farm, or, to put it another way, less than one-half the produce of these farms enters commercial channels. Whereas a single efficient and mechanized farm produces enough food to support at least ten families, these subsistence farms support less than two. "Part-time" farms are not strictly farms; usually they are rural residences for families whose major earnings come from employment off the farm.

Mechanization is favouring the larger farms and those located on fertile land. To state the situation in terms of an analogy, a wedge is being driven between two segments of our farm industry. On the one side of the wedge there are "the haves," the 15 to 20 per cent described earlier; on the other, the "have nots," on the small, non-mechanized farms, generally on infertile land. And while mechanization may help to push some farmers from the unfavourable to the favourable side of this wedge, its most general effect is to play into the hands of the relatively small group of operators already there.

This raises an issue of major concern in terms of national policy, a social problem rather than an economic one. As a large group of our farmers are placed at an increasing disadvantage by technological developments, they become less and less participants, not only in the commercial flow of the economy, but also in the social and political life of our country. This is already true of pockets of farm people located in nearly every province of Canada. This process of economic-

political-social isolation of groups of farm families has progressed much further in some parts of the United States than in Canada. It is a very serious problem in the Appalachian region. Sociologists designate such areas as "rural slums." In the Appalachian region, for instance, the "hillfolk" are on farms, but are cut off from the flow of commercial agriculture. They enjoy little in the way of educational, health, and recreational facilities. They have deplorably low standards of comfort in their homes.

It was not always this way. These followers of Daniel Boone carried on a productive and fairly prosperous agriculture for nearly a hundred years. However, with the opening of the fertile Mid-West, so favourable to machine production, these Appalachian people ranging from Alabama to West Virginia became increasingly sealed off from the economic, political, and cultural affairs of the nation. It is not out of place to give a warning that the same process can occur here in Canada—and is beginning. The development of these rural problem areas is hastened by technological progress in agriculture.

While tractors and tractor machinery clearly favour large farms, this does not spell the doom of the family farm. There are defensible grounds for believing that mechanization, instead of threatening the existence of the family farm, may actually strengthen that institution.

What is happening is that the average size of the family farm is being increased sharply as a result of mechanization. This implies a trend to a smaller number of such units. Mechanization, by increasing the volume of business and improving the efficiency of the family farm, is actually improving the position of the farm family on such units. Take the case of Saskatchewan. In the five year period 1941-6, the average size of farm increased by 10 per cent. Accompanying this change was a reduction of 10 per cent in the number of farms. It is a clear case of small farms being absorbed into larger ones or being combined to make more efficient units. Just as important in influencing efficiency and incomes was an addition of nearly $2,000 per farm in new machinery and equipment in the past decade. These changes are in the direction of a rationalization of the farm industry in Saskatchewan. And it has been occurring elsewhere, though with less speed.

There is no evidence of a trend toward extremely large farms or farms organized on a corporate basis. The major reason for this is that farming is still subject to extremely erratic fluctuations in the yield and price of produce. Although we have had stability of both factors for a remarkable series of years, no one familiar with agriculture expects this situation to continue indefinitely. And though we

have positive government programmes aimed at reducing the more extreme fluctuations in yield and price, a great deal of fluctuation cannot be avoided. This being the case, investors hesitate to put their funds in large farm undertakings. In farming, large-scale operations involving investments, say, of more than $100,000 are more risky than well-balanced family-sized farms which usually require an investment varying from $15,000 to $30,000. This is owing to the fact that in agriculture risk increases faster than the scale or size of the business. Considering all factors, and looking ahead twenty-five or even fifty years, the future of the family farm seems assured.

The extraordinary ability of the family farm to absorb risk is attributable in large part to the fact that the labour of the farm family represents most of the cost of agricultural production; and it is met on a non-cash or non-outlay basis. Farm management studies show that of all the costs involved in agricultural production, up to 70 per cent are represented by labour. Of this only 10 to 15 per cent is hired or paid for by cash. The farm family, in contributing its labour, provides more than one-half of all production factors going into agriculture and receives no direct pay. Its pay is the residual between total returns and aggregate costs other than family labour. Whereas on a family farm the proportion of total costs represented by cash outlays is generally from one-third to 40 per cent, the corresponding proportion on a large-scale farm which must depend very largely on hired labour would tend to run as high as 90 per cent. In the former situation, the business continues to operate in face of sharp decline in cash returns; in the latter the existence of the business is threatened.

The remarkable capacity of the farm family for bearing risk is given proper importance when one considers its conduct in the face of the instability which characterizes prices and yields in agriculture. Hard times came to the plains of the West in the nineteen-thirties with farm prices continuing for years at disastrously low levels and with the worst succession of crop failures in the history of that area. The farm price of wheat dropped from 98 cents per bushel in 1926-9 to 35 cents in 1932. Other farm products followed a similar trend, while the prices of machinery, binder twine, and other production requirements remained inflexible. The stories one frequently encountered in the West in those days of farmers shipping products to terminal markets and receiving no payment but only a bill for part of the freight are strictly non-fictional. They tell of the near break-down of our economy, at least in the realm of agriculture. Measured in terms

of income, gross cash receipts of Canadian farmers dropped from an average of $978 million in the period 1926-9 to $410 million in the years 1932-4. The situation was less favourable in terms of net income to farm operators. That figure which includes net cash income plus the value of farm products used in the home and the value of the use of the home itself fell from an average of $618 million in 1926-9 to $98 million in 1933. This $98 million represented the labour, management, and capital returns to some 700,000 Canadian farm families, an amount of $140 per farm family in that year. Out of this, food, clothing, fuel, furnishings, recreation, support of churches and such activities had to be met. Intolerably low incomes continued for a period of six years (1931-6). Relief from local, provincial, and federal governments was required to pull farmers through those years. Debt adjustments were forced on creditors, and moratoria on debt payments were proclaimed in the prairie provinces. The West came through the great depression, but not without severe scars. A measure of these was the reversal of the trek from eastern to western Canada—a phenomenon of fifty years' standing. Measured even in absolute numbers, Saskatchewan lost population in the nineteen-thirties. How remarkable this occurrence was is underlined by the fact that the province is naturally a high birth rate, low death rate area. The West came through the great depression, a fact which students who have examined this period in our history credit in no small part to the family farm.

Now Canada is embarking on risk-reducing policies in agriculture. Our Prairie Farm Assistance Act provides a mild dose of crop yield insurance. Our provincial governments are assisting in moving farmers out of areas subject to most frequent crop failures. These measures reduce risk on the production side. We have, on the other hand, a modest price support programme which reduces risk on the price side. The International Wheat Agreement also operates in this direction. In fact, the most distinct single line in current farm policy is that of cutting risks. However, these measures have not yet reached the point of endangering the family farm. Nor will they, for we are protected against excesses in this direction by our dependence on world markets and our consequent inability to insulate our agriculture from world conditions. There remains considerable scope for constructive farm policy, for pursuing measures which will strengthen the family farm, even though they may result in reducing the number of such units. Among these measures are programmes for further reducing the risks to which agriculture is subjected.

REVIEWS

COLERIDGE'S PHILOSOPHICAL LECTURES* — M. H. ABRAMS

The major part of his philosophical speculations Coleridge confided to his notebooks and the ears of his friends, or incorporated in letters, or poured out lavishly upon the margins of his own and other people's books. From 1816 to the spring of 1819, however, Coleridge communicated his philosophy to the general public at shorter intervals and greater length than in any other period. In those years he published the *Biographia Literaria,* the *Treatise on Method,* and the two *Lay Sermons;* he also issued the revised and greatly enlarged edition of *The Friend* and (it is probable) composed the interesting essay on the philosophy of biology which was published posthumously as the *Theory of Life.* And in December of 1818 he began, concurrently with other lectures on literary subjects, a course of fourteen weekly lectures on the history of Western philosophy.

Even the fact that Coleridge delivered this course has been almost forgotten, and the manuscript report of the lectures, after passing through the hands of J. H. Green and E. H. Coleridge, was lost to sight entirely at the end of the last century. The report turned up again in 1934, rummaged out from the back of a cupboard, and is now made available to us by Professor Kathleen Coburn. It consists of a record taken in shorthand and transcribed by a professional reporter, who was faced with the staggering task of recording *verbatim* the discourse of a "philo-parenthesist" (as Coleridge called himself), studded with technical and foreign terms and archaic revivals. On the whole, the report turned out to be surprisingly accurate and complete. Furthermore, Professor Coburn has been able to fill in and correct many of its omissions and errors from such sources as the notebook in which Coleridge jotted down his preliminary lecture notes, and the marginal comments in Tennemann's lengthy *Geschichte der Philosophie*—a book Coleridge held in little esteem, but which gave him the indispensable frame of chronological and biographical facts on which to order his own presentation.

The difficult task of editing these lectures, which daunted earlier Coleridgeans, Professor Coburn has accomplished with devotion and skill. She has contributed a valuable introduction, as well as a copious gloss which clarifies many obscurities and serves as a guide to related ideas in Coleridge's other writings. She combines esteem for Coleridge

**The Philosophical Lectures of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* Edited by KATHLEEN COBURN. New York: Philosophical Library [Toronto: George J. McLeod Ltd.]. 1949. Pp. 480. $9.75

as a thinker with a just sense of his shortcomings, and has not sacrificed her sense of humour to an undertaking requiring infinite pains. As a result, she has made available to us a reliable and very useful text of Coleridge's longest work—longer, even, than the *Biographia Literaria*. When Professor Coburn fulfils her plans for publishing Coleridge's many notebooks, we may anticipate the largest and most important addition to the Coleridge canon since H. N. Coleridge issued his uncle's *Literary Remains* in the eighteen-thirties.

In his *Philosophical Lectures* Coleridge set out to chronicle the history, not of individual theories, but of philosophy as a general human enterprise, conceived, Coleridge tells us, "as if it were the striving of a single mind," manifested in time as an organic process of "growth and development." The lectures constitute the first comprehensive history of philosophy in English as well as what, in its own day, was one of the best developmental histories of ideas available in any language. Coleridge's aim, however, was not to present an objective work of scholarship. He argues with ideas as he expounds them, and his factual inaccuracies, as we might expect, are many. Today the *Philosophical Lectures* will not be read for what they say of their subject, but for what they reveal of their author. And considered from this point of view, there is little in their substance which will be novel or surprising to students of Coleridge. They will prove valuable, nevertheless, by helping to confirm the main outlines and to fill in the details of Coleridge's mature thought, as exemplified in writings which are already accessible to us.

Coleridge bases his history on a bipolar division of all thinking minds. "There are but two possible philosophies," he tells us, of which one is Aristotelian, and the other Platonist. The Aristotelian takes his stand in the external world, pictures the mind as a passive receiver which is furnished with all its knowledge by the senses, and conceives of "Ideas," or principles, as merely regulative of our judgments of reality. The Platonist begins with the mind as an act, and conceives of the powers and forms of the mind as constitutive of the reality which it perceives, so that what manifests itself in mind as an Idea also reveals itself in nature as a law. Coleridge's own allegiance, of course, is to the Platonists. But in accordance with his concept of the process of philosophy as a progressive equilibrium of opposites, Coleridge did not deny validity to the Aristotelian view: he held that both Platonism and Aristotelianism were necessary aspects of human thought, each generated and sustained by its opponent philosophy. Both perspectives, he tells us, will endure "as long as we are men and there is any difference between man and man in point of opinion."

One sub-class of "Aristotelians" Coleridge does single out, again and again, as the enemies of philosophy. These are the atomists and mechanists—who are frequently materialists as well—represented in ancient times by the followers of Democritus, and in recent times by Hobbes, Locke, and their many successors in England and France. Even this mechanical elementarism, Coleridge says, as an instrument for examining nature, "'cannot be too highly valued." The fatal error lay in converting the hypotheses of mechanical science into the principles of metaphysics. On the diffusion of this "brick and mortar" thinking (as he called it elsewhere), Coleridge in his lectures blames such diverse aspects of the eighteenth-century scene as a mechanical cosmology and psychology, an ethics based on hedonistic calculus, a prudential religion, a poetry composed of atomistic couplets, and a political theory of human particles endowed with individual rights which eventuated in the French Revolution and its Napoleonic aftermath. The *Philosophical Lectures,* it is plain, were for Coleridge one more battle-ground on which to wage his relentless war against the eighteenth century.

To such thinking in terms of the combination of inert elements, Coleridge opposes the concepts of vitalism and organic totality which had reached their climax in the *Naturphilosophie* of Schelling. "Is not the whole power of the universe concerned in every atom that falls and takes its place as a living particle there? . . . Depend on it, whatever is grand, whatever is truly organic and living, the whole is prior to the parts." Yet as Professor Coburn points out, one of the chief surprises of the *Lectures* is the short shrift Coleridge gives to Schelling when, near the end of the course, he comes to consider that philosopher. In part Coleridge's curtness is to be explained as the result of a mistake in timing his lectures, but he himself admitted to his auditors that "in truth I should be puzzled to give you a true account" of Schelling. The fact is that Coleridge's difficulty in evaluating the German philosopher is a clue to a chronic dilemma in his own philosophy. Coleridge had a great intellectual admiration for Kant, but felt the deeper spiritual affinity for that strand of what he called "dynamic" Platonism—from Plotinus, through the Renaissance neo-Platonists, Giordano Bruno, and Boehme—which culminated in Schelling. But against each of these philosophers in turn Coleridge, with a monotonous explicitness, brings the charge that this way of thinking, by identifying God with nature, eventuates in pantheism. And pantheism, in his opinion, "is but a painted Atheism."

Coleridge warns his listeners repeatedly that philosophy must be pursued independently of religion, but he also holds that a valid

philosophy must prepare the way for and be consummated in religion. And for Coleridge that religion had to consist in the orthodox tenets of a personal God, and of the reality of free will, sin, grace, and the immortality of the soul. But a philosophy which begins (as Coleridge's does in the *Biographia Literaria*) by positing as its first principle the endlessly generative opposition and reconciliation of opposites, yet must end with the specific dogmas of the Anglican apologists, exceeded the capacities of Coleridge's dialectic. This inherent difficulty is not the sole reason, but it is one of the principal reasons, why so much of Coleridge's formal philosophy was a matter of false starts, desperate borrowings, and contrived corridors leading to dead ends, and why his all-inclusive *Logosophia,* so often announced, could never be completed.

In the history of English thought, Coleridge the philosopher is an important figure. Among other things, he introduced into England the humane and tolerant and, on the whole, more rational aspect of the German philosophical renaissance, as Carlyle later introduced its other aspect of instinctualism, intolerance, and hero-worship. But Coleridge's own philosophy, although it often startles us with its insights and incorporates superlative single passages, cannot, in its total structure, be ranked with the great metaphysical systems it tries to emulate. Coleridge's genuine greatness lies in the theory and practice of literary criticism—though it must at once be added that this criticism owes its power to the fact that it is solidly grounded in the very philosophical principles which Coleridge could never manage, as philosophy, to fashion into a coherent whole.

CERVANTES IN ENGLISH* — M. A. BUCHANAN

The late Samuel Putnam was an experienced translator, having to his credit, besides the present work and three of Cervantes' *Exemplary Novels,* English versions of French and Portuguese novels. A studious man, to judge by title-page, introduction, and annotations, he addressed himself to serious people who do not mind interrupting their reading of the exploits of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza's drolleries to consult notes and variants (not always translated). Gentle readers, young and old, who first savoured the work, enjoyed its humour more spontaneously. In an ambiguous sub-title, Putnam

**The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha,* Complete in Two Parts. By MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA. A New Translation from the Spanish, with a Critical Text Based upon the First Editions of 1605 and 1615, and with Variant Readings, Variorum Notes, and an Introduction by SAMUEL PUTNAM. New York: The Viking Press [Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited]. 1949. Pp. xxx, vi, 1043. $12.50

offers a critical text, but the author's seemingly artless writing, his errors and inconsistencies, and the fact that he did not correct the proofs, preclude success in such an endeavour. The question arises, of course, whether a translation should be more correct than the original.

In this and other respects, translations are hard to assess. At best they are makeshifts that reproduce only the grosser parts of a work. As they cannot recreate the tone, subtle turns of phrase and allusion—the bond between author and reader—they seem dull and lifeless, being, as Cervantes said, like the under side of a tapestry. In his introduction, Putnam discusses previous English versions, by way of justifying a new one. The most generally read, because available in cheap reprints, are those of Motteux and Jarvis of the eighteenth century. Those of Ormsby, Smith (and Putnam) are more scholarly, but are published on large paper, with wide margins, and at a high price. By a strange turn of fortune, Motteux, although abused by scholars, and even called "odious," made a good start with the text by being the only one to render correctly the opening lines: "In a village of La Mancha, of which I cannot remember the name." Simpler, and retaining more of the ballad of the original, would be: "In a village of La Mancha, whose name I don't recall." It is a traditional Spanish way of beginning a narrative, with no reference to the imprisonment of Cervantes, as Putnam and others suggest or assert. Motteux does not always come off so well, but other translators have their bad days too, as for instance Putnam, in such an awkward sentence as, "He [Don Quixote] was so absorbed in these reflections, that without noticing it, he let go Rocinante's rein, and that animal, taking advantage of the freedom granted him [Rocinante] . . . ."

If a translation is to be judged by accuracy, Putnam's version on the whole bears comparison with Ormsby's, but, judged absolutely, it rarely if ever attains such excellence of diction as to make it outstanding as good English in its own right. For lack of a satisfactory criterion for judging a translation—Aristotle having overlooked this art—it may be useful, or at least interesting, to compare a few versions in a consecutive passage. An example of the best in Cervantes is any conversation between Don Quixote and his squire. In the following selection (II, XII), after an encounter with some strolling players who were going to a near-by village to repeat a performance, and so were in stage costume, the two exchange experiences, Don Quixote drifting as usual from a particular instance into general reflections on life—and death.

—For all that (quoth Don Quixote) if thou, Sancho, hadst let me give the on-set (as I desired) thou hadst had to thy share, at least, the Empresses golden crowne, and Cupids painted wings, for I had taken

um away against the haire, and given um thee. Your Players scepters and Emperours crownes (sayd Sancho) are never of pure golde, but leafe and Tinne. (Shelton, 1620.)

"I grant it," said Don Quixote: "nor is it fit the decorations of the stage should be real, but rather imitations, and the resemblance of realities, as the plays themselves must be: which, by the way, I would have you love and esteem, Sancho, and consequently those that write and also those that act them: for they are all instrumental to the good of the commonwealth, and set before our eyes those looking-glasses that reflect a lively representation of human life; nothing being able to give us a more just idea of nature, and what we are or ought to be, than comedians and comedies." (Motteux, 1700; Ozell revision, 1725.)

"Tell me, hast thou never seen a play in which kings, emperors, popes, lords, and ladies are introduced, with divers other personages; one acting the ruffian, another the knave, one the merchant, another the soldier; one a designing fool, another a foolish lover; and observed that, when the play is done, and the actors undressed, they are all again upon a level?" (Jarvis, 1742.)

"Yes, I have seen that," said Sancho.

"Well then," said Don Quixote, "the same thing happens in the comedy and life of this world, where some play emperors, others popes, and, in short, all the characters that can be brought into a play; but when it is over, that is to say when life ends, death strips them all of the garments that distinguish one from the other, and all are equal in the grave." (Ormsby, 1885.)

"It is a fine comparison," Sancho admitted, "though not so new but that I have heard it many times before. It reminds me of that other one, about the game of chess. So long as the game lasts, each piece has its special qualities, but when it is over they are all mixed and jumbled together and put into a bag, which is to the chess pieces what the grave is to life."

"Every day, Sancho," said Don Quixote, "you are becoming less stupid and more sensible." (Putnam, 1949.)

"Yes, sir; for some of your wisdom naturally clings to me," answered Sancho, "because land which by nature is barren and dry, if manured and cultivated, yields good crops. I mean that your conversation has been the manure that has fallen on the barren ground of my dry wit, the cultivation the time that I have served and communed with you." (Experimental, 1950.)

CAVALCANTI'S *CANZONE D'AMORE** — ERNEST H. WILKINS

Concerned, as so many earlier medieval writers had been, with the formulation and exposition of a theory of love, Guido Cavalcanti, unlike his predecessors, was not content with the conventional literary

**Guido Cavalcanti's Theory of Love: The* Canzone d'Amore *and Other Related Problems.* By J. E. SHAW. Toronto: University of Toronto Press—S. J. Reginald Saunders and Company Limited. 1949. Pp. x, 228. $3.85

approaches to the problem. He was himself something more than an amateur in the study of the philosophers of his own century—especially Albertus Magnus—and he determined to formulate a theory of love which should have psychological validity and, in consequence, a revealing significance. Having achieved his theory, he chose, being a poet, to expound it within the limits of a single *canzone*. This meant that material which might have filled a prose treatise of considerable length was compressed into seventy beautifully ordered rhythmic lines.

Though not deliberately cryptic, Cavalcanti's *Canzone d'Amore* is inevitably very difficult in its combination of technicality and compactness. Yet despite its difficulty—in part, indeed, because of that difficulty, but in part also because of its artistry and in part because of the general strength of Cavalcanti's poetic influence—the poem aroused at once an inquiring interest that has never ceased. It was composed shortly before 1300: two commentaries upon it were written within the next half-century; four more were written in the Renaissance; and several scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have studied it in detail, in editions or monographs. But the poem has waited for 650 years to receive a duly satisfying interpretation; and it has found that interpretation not in its native Tuscany, but in Ontario.

Professor Shaw has devoted the most thorough study imaginable to the poem itself, to its ascertainable sources, and to all previous commentaries and interpretations; and the result is a definitive elucidation of what had been darkly mysterious for so long a time. One must read even Professor Shaw's two hundred pages with intensive care; but such reading is amply repaid in the discovered certainty that intensive care has gone into every phrase of the writing, and that every phrase of the writing reflects a course of indefatigable investigation. One reads also with a constant awareness that poetry is being interpreted by a man who is deeply conscious of poetic values. The book is, in short, a triumph of perfectly patient scholarship and poetic sensitiveness, devoted to the study of a poem the greatness of which has been felt for centuries, but never before comprehended.

The volume in which Professor Shaw's study is contained is appropriately distinguished in its own typography and design.

STALIN: A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY* — LEONID I. STRAKHOVSKY

From the beginning of modern times a successful man has always attracted public interest and has always had devoted or critical biographers. Yet when one scrutinizes the annals of modern history,

**Stalin: A Political Biography.* By ISAAC DEUTSCHER. New York and London: Oxford University Press. 1949. Pp. x, 600. $5.00

one finds often that the ideas and ideals of the unsuccessful men, even men defeated either in battle or in politics, have contained fundamentally much more wisdom and much more real impetus for the progress of mankind than those who by force of personality or of fortune or both have come to the top as leaders of their nations or of their times. Stalin is no exception. But whereas in the case of leaders of the past, whether a Cromwell, a Napoleon, a Peter the Great, or a Lincoln, the evidence is there to study, our contemporary "heroes" whether they be Lenin, Mussolini, Hitler, Franco, Roosevelt, or Stalin, have taken great care to suppress or even destroy evidence derogatory to their "enlightened" role, some even going so far as to have the history of their times rewritten and a set of "new facts" created in order to enhance and to explain their success. Future historians dealing with the events of the last fifty years will have a hard time to discover the truth in the mass of contemporary material including so-called official documents which are often nothing but *post-factum* falsifications.

This is particularly true when one deals with the "official" histories or "official" documents of Soviet Russia. But Mr. Deutscher seems not only to accept official Soviet documents as gospel truth, but neglects altogether to use anti-Soviet documents and historical material to balance his picture of the Red dictator. As it is, the figure of the son of a Georgian cobbler (not peasant) whom Lenin recommended be dismissed from the post of Secretary-General of the Communist party because he was too rude, and who was a minor and principally local leader of the Bolsheviks until after Lenin's death, appears in this biography (as in the officially approved one published in Moscow in 1944) as a political and mental giant whose every act was right throughout his life of seventy-odd years. This uncritical attitude can be illustrated by a number of examples, of which space does not permit enumeration. Suffice it to point out that Stalin's part in the defense of Tsaritsyn (now Stalingrad) during the Civil War has been manufactured out of whole cloth by the servile agents of the Soviet leader. Had Mr. Deutscher consulted the writings not only of anti-Soviet political and military leaders who played an important role during the Civil War, but also those Soviet historical and military studies of that part of the Bolsheviks' struggle for power which were published in the early and middle twenties,[1] he would not, it is hoped,

[1] V. Antonov-Ovseyenko and B. Shaposhnikov, *Boyevaya rabota krasnoi armii i flota* (Moscow, 1923); *Grazhdanskaya voina: Boyevyie deistvia* (Leningrad, 1925-6), *Materialy* (Moscow, 1923-4), *Materialy po istorii krasnoi armii* (Moscow, 1923); S. Gusev, *Grazhdanskaya voina i krasnaya armia* (Moscow, 1925); N. Kakurin, *Strategichesky ocherk grazhdanskoi voiny* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1926); S. Piontkovsky, *Grazhdanskaya voina v Rossii* (Moscow, 1925).

have pictured Stalin as he does, in his one-sided presentation which follows exactly the "party line" as established after Stalin became supreme. Consequently, this biography does not supplant in any way the earlier life stories of the "wonder boy" from Georgia by Boris Souvarine and Leon Trotsky.

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